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CONTENTS / TABLE DES MATIÈRES

Thursday 18 October 2018 / Jeudi 18 octobre 2018

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Access to Natural Gas Act, 2018, Bill 32, Mr. McNaughton / Loi de 2018 sur l'accès au gaz naturel, projet de loi 32, M. McNaughton	
Mr. Mike Harris	1665
Mme France Gélinas	1666
Ms. Andrea Khanjin	1666
Mr. Guy Bourgouin.....	1666
Mrs. Nina Tangri.....	1667
Mr. Mike Harris	1667
Mr. Faisal Hassan.....	1667
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto	1669
Mr. Paul Miller.....	1670
Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	1670
Ms. Laura Mae Lindo	1670
Mr. Faisal Hassan.....	1670
Miss Kinga Surma.....	1671
Mr. Jamie West	1673
Mr. Jim McDonell.....	1673
Mr. Jeff Burch.....	1673
Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	1674
Miss Kinga Surma.....	1674
Second reading debate deemed adjourned	1674

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS / PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	1674
Mr. Gilles Bisson	1674
Ms. Jane McKenna.....	1674
Ms. Suze Morrison.....	1674
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	1675
Mr. Dave Smith.....	1675
Ms. Marit Stiles.....	1675
Mr. Mike Schreiner	1675
Mr. Robert Bailey	1675
Ms. Goldie Ghamari.....	1675
Ms. Jill Dunlop.....	1675
Mr. Parm Gill	1675
Mrs. Amy Fee	1675
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	1675
Hon. Steve Clark	1675
Hon. Jim Wilson	1675
Sign-language interpretation	
Mr. Bill Walker	1675
Motion agreed to	1675

Private members' public business

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	1675
Motion agreed to	1675

ORAL QUESTIONS / QUESTIONS ORALES

Employment standards

Ms. Andrea Horwath	1676
Hon. Sylvia Jones	1676
Hon. Laurie Scott	1676

Fiscal accountability

Ms. Andrea Horwath	1676
Hon. Rod Phillips	1676

Mercury poisoning

Ms. Andrea Horwath	1677
Hon. Greg Rickford.....	1677

Automobile insurance

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam.....	1678
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	1678

Minister's conduct

Mr. Taras Natyshak	1678
Hon. Michael A. Tibollo	1678

Taxation

Mr. Daryl Kramp.....	1679
Hon. Rod Phillips	1679

Executive compensation

Mr. Taras Natyshak	1680
Hon. Jim Wilson.....	1680

Violence against women

Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	1680
Hon. Caroline Mulroney	1680

Cannabis regulation

Ms. Jane McKenna.....	1681
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	1681

Violence against women

Ms. Suze Morrison	1681
Hon. Sylvia Jones	1681

Cannabis regulation

Mr. Jim McDonell	1682
Hon. Caroline Mulroney	1682

Education funding

Ms. Marit Stiles	1683
Hon. Lisa M. Thompson	1683

Government accountability

Mrs. Robin Martin.....	1683
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	1683

Horse racing industry

Mr. Percy Hatfield.....	1684
Hon. Victor Fedeli.....	1684
Mr. Wayne Gates	1684

Municipalities

Mr. Jeremy Roberts.....	1684
Hon. Steve Clark.....	1684

Visitor

Ms. Mitzie Hunter.....	1685
------------------------	------

Notice of dissatisfaction

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	1685
-------------------------------------	------

Member's privileges

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	1685
-------------------------------------	------

**INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS /
PRÉSENTATION DES VISITEURS**

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	1686
Mme Nathalie Des Rosiers.....	1686
Mr. Michael Parsa.....	1686
Mr. John Vanthof.....	1686
Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto.....	1686
Mr. Will Bouma	1686
Hon. Sylvia Jones.....	1686
Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho.....	1686
Mr. Daryl Kramp.....	1686
The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott)	1686

**MEMBERS' STATEMENTS /
DÉCLARATIONS DES DÉPUTÉS****Health care**

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	1687
------------------------------	------

Small Business Week

Mr. Michael Parsa.....	1687
------------------------	------

Curriculum

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown	1687
-----------------------------	------

Witness—Canadian Art of the First World War

Mr. Billy Pang.....	1687
---------------------	------

CKGN FM

M. Guy Bourgouin	1687
------------------------	------

Ronald Colaco

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto.....	1688
------------------------	------

Niagara region

Mr. Jeff Burch.....	1688
---------------------	------

Holodomor

Miss Kinga Surma.....	1688
-----------------------	------

Whitby technology sector

Mr. Lorne Coe.....	1688
--------------------	------

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES / DÉCLARATIONS
MINISTÉRIELLES ET RÉPONSES****National Disability Employment Awareness Month**

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho.....	1689
---------------------------------	------

Impaired driving

Hon. John Yakabuski	1689
---------------------------	------

Visitor

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott).....	1690
------------------------------------	------

National Disability Employment Awareness Month

Mr. Joel Harden.....	1690
----------------------	------

Impaired driving

Ms. Jennifer K. French.....	1691
-----------------------------	------

Visitors

Mr. Michael Parsa	1691
-------------------------	------

Mr. Gilles Bisson	1691
-------------------------	------

PETITIONS / PÉTITIONS**Employment standards**

Ms. Jill Andrew.....	1691
----------------------	------

Animal protection

Ms. Christine Hogarth.....	1692
----------------------------	------

Employment standards

Mr. Faisal Hassan.....	1692
------------------------	------

Injured workers

Mr. Joel Harden.....	1692
----------------------	------

Employment standards

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	1693
---------------------------	------

Mental health services

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	1693
---------------------------	------

Celiac disease

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	1693
------------------------------	------

Injured workers

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche	1693
---------------------------	------

Curriculum

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	1694
------------------------------	------

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS /
AFFAIRES D'INTÉRÊT PUBLIC
ÉMANANT DES DÉPUTÉS****Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals Act, 2018,
Bill 38, Mr. Bailey / Loi de 2018 sur l'équité fiscale
pour les professionnels de l'immobilier, projet de
loi 38, M. Bailey**

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	1694
------------------------	------

Mr. Gilles Bisson	1696
-------------------------	------

Mrs. Gila Martow	1697
------------------------	------

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong.....	1698
------------------------------	------

Mr. Stephen Lecce.....	1699
------------------------	------

Mr. Robert Bailey.....	1700
------------------------	------

Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Genetic Characteristics), 2018, Bill 40, Miss Mitas / Loi de 2018 modifiant le Code des droits de la personne (caractéristiques génétiques), projet de loi 40, Mme Mitas

Miss Christina Maria Mitas.....	1700
Mr. John Vanthof.....	1702
Mrs. Gila Martow.....	1703
Ms. Suze Morrison.....	1704
Mr. David Piccini.....	1704
Mrs. Robin Martin.....	1705
Miss Christina Maria Mitas.....	1706

Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Helmet Exemption for Sikh Motorcyclists), 2018, Bill 41, Mr. Sarkaria / Loi de 2018 modifiant le Code de la route (exemption de l'obligation de port du casque pour les motocyclistes sikhs), projet de loi 41, M. Sarkaria

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria.....	1706
Mr. Gurratan Singh.....	1707
Mr. Kaleed Rasheed.....	1709
Mr. Amarjot Sandhu.....	1709
Mr. Deepak Anand.....	1710
Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria.....	1711

Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals Act, 2018, Bill 38, Mr. Bailey / Loi de 2018 sur l'équité fiscale

pour les professionnels de l'immobilier, projet de loi 38, M. Bailey

Second reading agreed to 1711

Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Genetic Characteristics), 2018, Bill 40, Miss Mitas / Loi de 2018 modifiant le Code des droits de la personne (caractéristiques génétiques), projet de loi 40, Mme Mitas

Second reading agreed to 1711

Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Helmet Exemption for Sikh Motorcyclists), 2018, Bill 41, Mr. Sarkaria / Loi de 2018 modifiant le Code de la route (exemption de l'obligation de port du casque pour les motocyclistes sikhs), projet de loi 41, M. Sarkaria

Second reading agreed to 1711

ORDERS OF THE DAY / ORDRE DU JOUR

Time allocation

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy.....	1712
Mr. Vincent Ke.....	1712
Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy.....	1713
Mr. Gilles Bisson.....	1718
Vote deferred.....	1719

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
OF ONTARIO

Thursday 18 October 2018

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE
DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 18 octobre 2018

The House met at 0900.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Let us pray.
Prayers.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ACCESS TO NATURAL GAS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ACCÈS
AU GAZ NATUREL

Resuming the debate adjourned on October 4, 2018, on the motion for second reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to amend the Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998 / Projet de loi 32, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1998 sur la Commission de l'énergie de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Further debate? The member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I get to finish off some quick remarks from—I believe it's been almost two weeks ago now, since we were speaking on this. But just to recap a little bit about where I was, we were talking about how the opposition always likes to remind us every once in a while that, even though we have a majority government, we didn't necessarily have all the votes, so to speak. I just want to talk a little more about furthering that.

Our government entered the 42nd Parliament with a definitive majority. Second of all, I'm sure that the majority of constituents in the members' ridings who say a lot of these things would be pleasantly surprised to see their heating bills reduced, and especially in the winter months, as a result of this policy.

The opposition often tells us that they are the voice of working families and they are the voice of the people. Correct me if I'm wrong, Mr. Speaker, but the member from Algoma–Manitoulin is supposed to be a voice of the north. To be frank, I think to be unsupportive of Bill 32 and the common-sense proposal to expand natural gas and lower energy costs is only to do working families and the residents of northern and rural regions of this province an injustice.

I think that the CEO of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, Joe Vaccaro, hit the nail on the head—and yes, there is a pun intended there—and I quote: “The decision to extend natural gas services will support future housing supply and choice in rural and northern communities while providing home owners and businesses with an affordable and reliable heating option that will keep their everyday costs down.” Constituents and stakeholders have spoken loud and clear in support of this policy.

I just noticed, Mr. Speaker, that the clock is not ticking, so I'm not sure where we are at time-wise here, but—
Interjection.

Mr. Mike Harris: Three minutes? Four minutes?

As I previously mentioned, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and its partner organizations are in full support of the direction that our government is moving in on a number of policies, and especially the natural gas file. Just recently, Jeff Stager from the Waterloo Federation of Agriculture, which represents the local voice of farmers in my riding, told my office clearly that the lack of natural gas access in Waterloo region is a major issue. Despite it being the most inexpensive fuel source, many farmers still don't have access. If they want it, they have to pay a huge cost for a supply pipe to be extended to the end of their laneway.

In a recent news release, the president of the OFA, Keith Currie, delivered a similar message to that of Jeff's, stating: “Energy is one of the largest inputs on farms, and we need access to natural gas to help boost the competitiveness of rural Ontario communities, businesses and farms.” Natural gas is the single most important investment that our government will be able to deliver to grow that sector.

We are here this morning debating Bill 32. Whether or not it should pass through the House, the message from stakeholders and those who really need improved energy and access supply is clear: Expansion of natural gas services is what we need. It is what working Ontario families need, what rural Ontario needs, what northern Ontario needs and what Ontario businesses need.

That is why, when the Premier remarked on September 18, “We heard from people across Ontario that natural gas expansion is important in order to grow businesses, create jobs and compete,” we know he was speaking for the people—not just some of the people, as the opposition likes to say, but all Ontarians.

Every day, Ontarians and Ontario businesses benefit from natural gas. To hammer this point home, let's look again at the most basic facts. Natural gas is the most common heating source in Ontario, and is more affordable than sources like electricity, oil and propane. Switching to natural gas can save an average residential customer—and this is the key takeaway here, Mr. Speaker—between \$800 and \$2,500 a year. That is a very substantial savings.

There are currently about 3.5 million homes and 130,000 businesses in Ontario that use natural gas. The changes introduced via Bill 32 could potentially enable

natural gas connections for another 70 communities, connecting approximately 33,000 rural and northern households. Need I say more?

So I stand here this morning in support of Bill 32 because this is the right thing to do: natural gas expansion across the province, touching another 70 communities, 33,000 households.

I've had propane heat in the past; it is extremely expensive. I've had oil heat in the past; it is extremely expensive. And I've had electric heat in the past. I have moved around a little bit. But in northern Ontario, sometimes you don't have a lot of options.

I'm looking forward to being able to see this proliferate through the province. I know that the people of Kitchener-Conestoga are looking forward to it as well.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

M^{me} France Gélinas: It was interesting, listening to the member. His wishes are wishes that we all share.

I represent a rural northern riding. We have those huge, 18-inch natural gas pipes that go straight through my riding but don't connect any of us. We pay an astronomical amount of money, heating our houses with electricity. I would say that not a week goes by that I don't have a constituent asking, "When are we going to be able to connect to natural gas?"

But between his wishes and what's in the bill, there's an ocean. There is no obligation for the gas companies to ever come to rural northern Ontario.

We all know exactly what will happen. In suburban areas, the natural gas will expand to a neighbourhood where half of it has natural gas and the other one doesn't have it. But in northern Ontario and in Nickel Belt, which I represent, the natural gas companies make it really clear that there is no money to be made in connecting people who live far apart in the heart of the Canadian Shield, where you have to drill and dynamite through rocks to get anything more than half an inch under the ground.

So that is wishful thinking. Put in the bill that they will have to go to northern rural Ontario, that they will have to come to Nickel Belt and that they will have to serve the farmers of Nickel Belt, who tried really hard. But none of that is in the bill. In the bill, we give them the opportunity to collect \$2.5 million a month from existing customers, and they do with it what they see fit. That means Nickel Belt is left behind, and I can't stand for that.

0910

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Questions and comments?

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Our government was elected with a clear mandate: To make life more affordable for Ontario families and Ontario businesses. There is no better example than this bill. A lot of families were struggling. They were making really tough decisions between heating and eating. Many businesses were struggling. They were moving across the border because it was just unaffordable to have their business thrive here.

Those days are over because our government is offering hope and prosperity again for all Ontarians. Let me break

that down into figures for you, Mr. Speaker. With this change to natural gas expansion, we can see bills for the average family drop by \$80 a year, while small businesses are going to save \$285 a year. That's substantial. That's real money going back into the pockets of people, because this government believes that people can thrive and prosper better if we're putting money back into their pockets rather than taking it away. We believe in giving people prosperity and hope, rather than taking that away and fearmongering.

In addition to those numbers, what we're also going to see in terms of electric heating and propane and how much people are going to be saving to switch to alternative fuel like natural gas is that the savings are going to result from about \$800 to about \$2,500 a year. Again, those are substantial savings for families and for businesses.

I would like to echo the fact that our government wants to work with the people. We want to make tomorrow easier than yesterday, next week easier than the week before and the next month easier than the month before that. We believe that we need to be working with the people of Ontario rather than working against them, similar to what the federal government could be doing. They could be working with us on an alternative to climate change, rather than taxing people to the ground.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Mushkegowuk-James Bay.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Merci, madame la Présidente. I heard what they were saying, the government on the other side, but I think, like my colleague from Nickel Belt was saying: wishful thinking. The bill should speak about northern Ontario and Aboriginal communities. I'll give you an example: Lac Ste.-Thérèse, M. Potvin, who takes care of the public in the Hearst area. He asked to get natural gas. If you leave it to companies, they won't bring natural gas to outside rural. Why? Because if they don't get a quick return on their money, it's not going to happen. They asked to get natural gas. The letter that came back from natural gas was saying, "No, unfortunately, because there are no major industries between you and there's 17 kilometres, we can't expand the line." Well, there are two businesses in-between, mid-point: Rheault Distillery and Villeneuve Construction. And there are 109 houses a little bit further down. Yet, the natural gas company doesn't want to expand.

What do you believe is going to happen when more people are asking to get connected: Moonbeam or, again, Kitigan? The line gets to Kitigan, but only six houses are connected. And two kilometres further there are two businesses and 20 houses that could get connected. Again, \$140,000 to get connected. They didn't get a letter saying, "No problem; we will."

Leaving it to natural gas companies just won't happen. Put in your bill that rural, northern communities and Aboriginal communities will get connected to natural gas that will expand in northern Ontario, not lip service.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from Mississauga-Streetsville.

Mrs. Nina Tangri: Thank you, Madam Speaker, and thank you to my colleagues and to the members opposite for your remarks on this very, very important topic. I'd like to thank our Minister of Infrastructure and his team for moving forward on this issue and listening to the people in the rural areas.

Currently, as we all know, about three and a half million residential customers and 130,000 businesses across the province use natural gas for heating. But we know that this is not enough. The fact is, most of Ontario, demographically and geographically, doesn't have access to safe, affordable natural gas. Three and a half million customers is only approximately one quarter of our province's population. That's less than 20% of rural Ontarians who have access to natural gas, forcing them to rely on pricier energy sources such as oil, propane and electricity. Those of us who live in more urban areas almost take it for granted that we have access to great natural gas. It heats our homes; it heats our water. We use it even for our barbecues and to cook. We take it for granted. We truly, truly believe that everyone should have that access and that affordability. Our government wants to allow the people of Ontario to spend their hard-earned dollars the way they would like, and by enabling greater access to natural gas, we will be doing just that.

I would really like to thank again our minister and his team, and my colleagues here, for making sure that we listen to the people of rural Ontario and we take their needs very, very seriously. I'm really looking forward to when we can expand natural gas for everyone, all across this province.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member for Kitchener–Conestoga.

Mr. Mike Harris: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm sorry that you missed the tail end of what we were talking about earlier. I know you were glued to the edge of your seat when we were last speaking about this.

I would like to thank the members for Nickel Belt, Barrie–Innisfil, Mushkegowuk–James Bay and also Mississauga–Streetsville for their thoughtful comments.

I'd just like to share, quickly, my own story with propane versus natural gas. We have a family cottage just outside of North Bay, Ontario. It's a fairly rural area in Nipissing township. The population on the south shore of Lake Nipissing is not a lot of people. We heat the house with propane. It's very expensive—extremely expensive, in fact. It's more than three times the price for me to heat my house in Waterloo region.

I think that, as you move further north and you move out into some of the more outlying areas and, like the members opposite were saying, around Sudbury and up north, east of Timmins and the Cochrane area, it is expensive to heat your home. Let's face it: The cost of living in northern Ontario is more.

I am looking forward to being a champion for not only southwestern Ontario, where I live, but also northern Ontario, where I have many, many family members and many, many friends. I want to make sure that when we go

forward with this bill—I know that the Minister of Infrastructure will be taking a lot of those comments into account and making sure that we do this in the most efficient manner in being able to make sure that we are able to reach the maximum amount of households. We campaigned on making life more affordable here in Ontario and making Ontario open for business again. I know that's what our Minister of Infrastructure and our Premier, Doug Ford, want to do. I am very happy to stand up in support of Bill 32.

Thank you to all of my colleagues, again, who have spoken today, and on the other side as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I want, first, to acknowledge my legislative assistant, who is here with us today: Jasmine Attfield.

Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating all members of the House for their election to this chamber and congratulate you for your selection to the Chair.

It is a great honour and privilege to give my inaugural speech. Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the traditional land of the Wendat, the Anishnawbe, the Haudenosaunee, the Métis and the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

I want to say how honoured and humbled I am to be the member of provincial Parliament for York South–Weston. I must thank all of my campaign volunteers who helped me talk to thousands of residents in every corner of my riding.

Thank you. Merci. Gracias. Shukriyaa. Mahadsanid. Grazie. Salamat. Obrigado. Cảm ơn bạn.

0920

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Laura Albanese, and I wish her well in her endeavours.

I'm looking forward to working with all of my colleagues, and I'm honoured to serve this House as a member of the NDP. It is my great honour to be the first ever member of the Somali community elected to provincial office anywhere in Canada. This election, our leader, Andrea Horwath, and the NDP elected a team that truly represents the great diversity of this province, and I could not be happier to be part of that team. Madam Speaker, I intend to be a strong voice and advocate for all 116,690 residents of York South–Weston.

Madam Speaker, my life's adventure began in the Horn of Africa. I was in my late teens when I made the fateful decision to leave my home of Somalia. I arrived in Italy all by myself to start a new life. I worked odd jobs in Rome, basically to survive. I stayed there for almost three years. From there, I was given the opportunity to go to Winnipeg, and that is where my Canadian journey began. Imagine a young Somali man arriving in Winnipeg all alone, with only the clothes on his back. That was me in 1990.

Almost 30 years ago. I arrived in Canada—Manitoba, to be exact—on my own, but hopeful for the future. It is where I seized upon the dream, the ambition, the inspiration, that all Canadian newcomers harbour. I immediately

started working at Eaton's, and continued in order to pay my way through school. I earned a degree, I got involved in politics, and I tried to make a difference.

After graduating from the University of Winnipeg, I moved to York South–Weston. As a matter of fact, a job opportunity brought me to Toronto. I have lived there in Weston ever since, from Jane to Harding to Church, while exploring everywhere in between. I proudly reside in Weston. It is my community. I love our community. But the last 15 years have shown a deep need for change. It is this need that motivated me to run for office, so that I could help more people. I love York South–Weston, and I'm so proud to call it home.

Madam Speaker, I want to work assisting vulnerable newcomers, helping them secure housing and other essential social supports to ease in the transition to their new home. I was incredibly proud of that work and the difference it made to many who had experienced the ravages of war and endured severe hardship to arrive in this welcoming, safe, beautiful province we call home.

After a number of years of that work plus wonderful experiences as a writer, a radio broadcaster and a community activist, I was given the opportunity to work as a constituency assistant in my community. It was there, in a very short period of time, that we assisted hundreds upon hundreds of local residents with housing, social assistance, disability claims and numerous other provincial issues. No matter the issue, we rolled up our sleeves and tried to get it resolved. It was this commitment and constituent service that guides me to this very day.

From there, I went back to work in the social service field before the exciting election of Jack Layton in 2011. Madam Speaker, I was hired again as a constituency assistant in my community and worked at the local office on South Station Street, where for four and a half years we worked hard each and every day to make a positive difference in the lives of the people who call this riding home.

Madam Speaker, York South–Weston is as diverse as any riding in this province. People come here from all over the world to start new lives. Just like me, they come with dreams and ambition to succeed. But the reality is that they and everyone else who calls York South–Weston home have been let down by previous Liberal and Conservative governments. These governments were out of touch. They have delisted essential health care services, they have made life tougher for the most vulnerable members of our society, they have made daily essentials much more expensive, and they have neglected to adequately financially support our city.

Madam Speaker, let me share with you what the people in this culturally diverse riding have told me they want this Legislature to know. Over the last 15 years, their lives have gotten harder and harder. Our community continues to grow, each day, richer in diversity and population. Yet people still cannot easily travel to work, access health care without being forced into hallways, or afford to pay hydro or child care. Sometimes our youth cannot drive or work in their own neighbourhood without being stopped by police as a result of carding.

They cannot afford more cuts. They need us to look at investing in the public, with affordable child care for everyone, pharmacare and dental care. They need us to make life more affordable for everyone in our communities, reducing our hydro rates and making transit more accessible. They want efficient and affordable public transit. They want to be able to work and provide for their families.

It has become clear over the last 15 years, as systemic racism continues to go unaddressed, that Black youth and people of colour are not being given the same chance. Banning carding is one of many steps needed to address the imbalance in outcomes faced by many Canadians. They want us to address systemic racism. People deserve more from their government than declarations, symbolic gestures and more studies.

Carding disproportionately impacts racialized youth in my riding. It is unconstitutional and cannot be allowed to continue in Ontario. Every person in our province should be able to go about their day without fear of being arbitrarily and unlawfully detained because of their race or their ethnicity.

The racialized young people in my riding are also subject to unequal educational outcomes. Of all the Black students in our province, only 69 out of 100 will graduate high school, and only 18 of them will go on to post-secondary education.

The systemic discrimination faced by my constituents also includes limited access to transportation. People in our community are being hit hard by high auto insurance rates, simply because of where they live, of their postal code. It is time to end postal code discrimination in auto insurance.

And for those who rely on public transit, their options are severely limited. Every day, people in our community rely on Weston, Jane and Keele buses. Often they are left waiting, or riding in overcrowded buses, each day. The Liberals have not been able to improve this in 15 years of government. Liberals cut \$4 billion from GTA transit in 2010, when Kathleen Wynne was transportation minister, slashing Toronto's Transit City plans from eight LRT lines to four, thus creating the Save Transit City movement. In 1995, the Conservatives famously cancelled the Eglinton subway to Pearson, paying millions just to fill a hole.

For decades, these governments have given the residents in York South–Weston less and less service for higher and higher prices.

0930

Another glaring example of this has been hydro. Hydro is not a luxury and should not be priced like one. Not a day goes by where I don't hear from a person in our community who is struggling to choose between heating their home and paying for their rent or groceries, and more people still who have to forgo extracurricular programs for their children or saving for retirement because of the rising hydro bills.

Over the past 15 years, we have only seen this get worse and worse. This government is promising further privatization, and we all know that means that costs will go up. The NDP plan addresses the underlying costs of hydro

instead of pushing problems into the future. Our plan would lower hydro costs for all ratepayers by up to 30% and keep those costs down.

As the cost of living under the Liberal and Conservative governments skyrockets, employment is on the decline. People in my community are struggling more and more each day to find employment. Young people who have degrees are still struggling. York South–Weston is a working-class community built on manufacturing jobs. But the Liberal government sat on the sidelines for more than 15 years while more than 300,000 manufacturing jobs left the province, and the Conservatives have no plan to bring it back.

As the jobs become more technical and competitive, education and training become ever more important. People in our community tell me how important it is to them that their children stay in school, and they ask that we help them fund good schools. They want after-school programs and youth-focused initiatives.

But it is not just young people who have suffered under Liberal and Conservative governments. Our seniors are struggling too. People in our community want our seniors respected with dignity and having access to services when they need them.

Our community is strong and diverse. We are multicultural. I know that our diversity is what makes us so strong and vibrant. But our community has its share of challenges. York South–Weston is a working-class community in the northwest of the city of Toronto, an area of declining manufacturing. It is the second-poorest riding in Ontario. Over a quarter of men, women and children in our community live below the poverty line. Nearly a third lack a basic high school diploma. Nearly half the population rent; they do not own their homes. One in seven residents is a senior, many of whom are living in poverty too.

York South–Weston is the former home of manufacturers such as CCM, Moffat stove, Massey-Harris, MacMillan Bloedel, Dominion Bridge, Ferranti-Packard, Kodak, and the list goes on and on. They have all left. Tens of thousands of jobs are gone. The people who worked here earned family-supporting wages, lived in modest, comfortable homes and shopped locally, building the local economy.

But now, with the jobs all gone, unemployment is a major concern in my community. The unemployment rate for York South–Weston is habitually higher than the national norm. Youth unemployment is even higher still. The few jobs that remain tend to be low-wage, precarious service sector jobs. Good-paying jobs with decent, family-supporting wages and benefits are the top priority for me and my community.

But even those who do find jobs here must find them outside the riding and must use public transit—which, in my community, is city buses—to get to work. Some have told me at the door that they spend as many as three and a half hours every day commuting, which is time taken away from their families.

Madam Speaker, my riding is home to many newcomers who want opportunities to start a better life. They can succeed when they have access to adequate programs and services. The Premier has decided to cut not only the

funding for those public services but to cut Toronto city council to 25 seats from 47. This is not how governments acting for the people conduct themselves. At stake is the effective and efficient provision of vital services that are provided to working families and local communities, and programs that effect the quality of life of all Torontonians. He has meddled in an election that was already well under way so that he and his developer friends can have their way at city hall.

This deliberate interference is unprecedented in Ontario history. It shows the same contempt for democracy that marked the Mike Harris regime, the last time Conservatives ran this province. This move is driven not by a pursuit of savings but by the shadowy special interests that want to reduce accountability so that they can profit from the resources of our city. Doug Ford is abusing the power of the Premier's office to meddle in Toronto's municipal election and is targeting his political enemies by scrapping some regional chair elections altogether. It is the kind of behaviour we expect from dictators, not the Premier of Ontario.

The people in my community are asking us to hold public consultations to examine all of the ways Toronto could be better run and then to propose appropriate legislation in plenty of time to bring in reforms prior to the next municipal election. Doug Ford's unilateral decision to shrink the size of Toronto city council is—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The member is reminded to refer to members by their titles or their ridings and that we do not impute motive. The member will withdraw.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Withdraw, Madam Speaker. Thank you.

I am also deeply concerned about this government's decision to cancel Ontario's cap-and-trade pollution pricing system. It is equally wrong to break clean energy contracts and to cut green rebates for homes, schools and businesses. These kinds of decisions will hurt people who want to save money by saving energy. They are costing us jobs and investments by chasing away clean economy business. They are putting Ontarians on the hook for billions of dollars in cancelled permits and unnecessary legal fees and undermining public trust in the reliability and consistency of Ontario's laws and commitments.

Instead of going backwards, Ontario needs a real climate change plan that includes a price on pollution that assists people and small businesses to lower their emissions. But unfortunately, it's clear that this government does not have the foresight to make any plans whatsoever.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I'm proud to rise here today to support Bill 32, the Access to Natural Gas Act, introduced by the Minister of Infrastructure.

As the minister said, we campaigned on a promise to make life easier and more affordable, including relief for skyrocketing energy costs, and that is exactly what Bill 32 will provide. It's a promise made and a promise kept. In many parts of rural and northern Ontario, families and

businesses will now be able to change from expensive electric heating, propane or oil to affordable natural gas. This will save them an average of \$800 to \$2,500 per year.

Madam Speaker, it is worth taking a moment today to remember how far we have come in just two years. Two years ago in this place, the former Minister of the Environment, the former member from Toronto Centre, was talking about eliminating natural gas from all of Ontario. In response a question from the member from Sarnia, the Liberal minister said, "In Toronto, where I live, my building and others in my neighbourhood don't need to be running on natural gas."

0940

Rather than saving families and small businesses \$800 to \$2,500 per year, this would have cost families in my riding \$800 to \$2,500 each year. Rather than looking for ways to make life easier and more affordable, our previous Liberal governments were looking for ways to make life harder and less affordable.

Thank you again to the Premier and our Minister of Infrastructure for taking a different approach. I urge all members to join me in supporting Bill 32.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Paul Miller: I would like to start off by saying congratulations to the new member from York South-Weston. He did an excellent maiden speech. I must commend him for the journey that he took starting in 1990 in Rome—Somalia, then Rome. It's amazing, in that short period of time, to be sitting in this House, and I'm extremely proud of what you did. Your determination to overcome and climb those hills is certainly remarkable.

Imagine the odds against you getting here, and how you started off. Even if you had a great education from where you come, the boundaries you had to go through and the hills you had to climb to achieve your education, to put yourself through university with no assistance, unlike a lot of us in here, who have had—my family has been here well over 150 years. I certainly had a better chance. But the bottom line is, I want to remind everyone in this chamber: We are all immigrants, except the Indigenous people. So when I hear the word "immigrant," I'm talking about myself too.

We're all Canadians. We're proud Canadians. The diversity in our country is wonderful. Look at this room. Look at the backgrounds of the people who are sitting and making judgments for the people of this province. You should all be proud of yourselves. The backgrounds that you all come from were building blocks for our community, and I'm glad to serve in this House with all of you. We do have our differences occasionally—it does pop up—but certainly the people that put us here are proud of what we're doing and how we're building Canada.

Thank you for your service, thank you for your journey, and welcome to our caucus.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Madam Speaker, we have heard from people across Ontario that natural gas expansion is important in order to grow business, create jobs, and compete. By cancelling the cap-and-trade carbon tax, we have already acted to bring natural gas prices down for Ontario families and businesses. Now we are taking the next step, to ensure that the benefits of natural gas expansion are shared throughout the entire province.

The Access to Natural Gas Act, if passed, will ensure agricultural competitiveness and a thriving rural economy. The Ontario agri-food sector is one of the world's most diverse, with almost 5,000 farms, contributing \$106 billion to the province's GDP and supporting 1.2 million jobs. That's one in eight Ontario workers.

Expanding access to natural gas will put money back in people's pockets, as residential customers can save between \$800 to \$2,500 per year by switching from electric heating, propane or oil. Madam Speaker, expanding natural gas will make Ontario communities more attractive for job creation and new businesses. This is part of our government's plan to bring quality jobs back to Ontario and to send a clear message that Ontario is open for business.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Ms. Laura Mae Lindo: I am so honoured to stand up and say congratulations to my new colleague from York South-Weston. Having an opportunity to hear your passion and commitment to your community gives me hope, because that's the kind of passion and commitment that we actually need in order to move Ontario forward.

I just wanted to take a minute to point out some of the key pieces. I know you spoke a lot about how diverse your community is etc., but one of the pieces that resonated the most with me was your discussion of the need for action in order to bring change. We can't actually address the issues of youth unemployment without real action. We can't say that we're doing anti-racism work if we're not going to ban carding. We can't actually achieve without real action. I think what was most passionate and what was most moving for me was to hear you speak about it in your own journey, as well.

Thank you very much for bringing those words to this House as a reminder not only of the work that we're doing here for our constituents, but of the work that we have done to actually come here, to arrive here in this place, and to make the kinds of decisions that are going to have an impact on everybody.

Again, congratulations.

May we all take some time to listen to this call to action and find ways to work across our differences.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from York South-Weston for his remarks.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I would like to thank the member from Mississauga-Lakeshore for participating in the debate, and also our own Hamilton East-Stoney Creek member, the Scarborough-Rouge Park member, and my friend from Kitchener Centre.

Instead of going backwards, Ontario needs a real climate change plan that includes a price on pollution, that

assists people and small businesses to lower their emissions. Unfortunately, it's clear that this government does not have the foresight to make any plan whatsoever.

In communities across Ontario, Ford Conservatives' cuts are already being felt.

It is time that we urge this government to rethink its priorities and establish priorities that can assist all Ontarians regardless of where they live, regardless of their gender, regardless of who they are—not merely a very few well-to-do Conservative members or Conservative donors.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Miss Kinga Surma: I want to congratulate the member from York South–Weston. He is my neighbour to the east. I look forward to working with him over the next four years.

Madam Speaker, looking towards the other side of the House leaves a lot to be desired—because the truth of the matter is, on this side of the House we are doing great things for the people of Ontario.

I rise today in support of Bill 32, the proposed Access to Natural Gas Act. I want to thank my colleague the Honourable Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure, for bringing forward this bill, which, if passed, would make it possible for more people to have access to affordable natural gas.

The demand for expanded natural gas access across Ontario is high. Most Ontarians who lack access to natural gas live in rural, remote and First Nation communities. These communities are in need of new natural gas networks to make life easier and more affordable for their families and their businesses.

Natural gas is an affordable heating option for families and businesses. Approximately 3.5 million residential customers and 130,000 businesses across Ontario currently rely on natural gas.

Madam Speaker, during the campaign and even well before then, constituents in my riding and across the province strongly expressed that affordability was their greatest challenge when asked what could be done better to improve their lives.

0950

The government has heard from families, businesses and communities across Ontario that natural gas expansion is important in order to grow businesses, create jobs and compete. The switch from electric heat, propane or oil to natural gas can save an average residential customer between \$800 and \$2,500 a year, putting money back into people's pockets.

Since the House was called into session immediately following the election, we have taken action to address the issue of making life more affordable for the people of Ontario by moving critical legislation. The very first thing our government did to make life more affordable for Ontarians was to get rid of the cap-and-trade carbon tax that was imposed by the previous Liberal government. We ended the era of Ontario's carbon tax.

A cap-and-trade carbon tax increased the price of absolutely everything. That is why our party took immediate

action to wind down the cap-and-trade carbon tax, benefiting all Ontarians. We're committed to putting more money in your pocket. By removing the cost of the cap-and-trade carbon tax from natural gas bills, we've saved families approximately \$80 a year and small businesses approximately \$285 a year.

In addition, the conclusion of cap-and-trade is a key step forward to fulfilling our government's goal to reduce gas prices by 10 cents a litre. After only being in office for four months, drivers across Ontario have been seeing the benefits of a PC government. Gas prices across the province dropped an average of five cents per litre. This did not happen by accident. A huge contributor that helped decrease the price was our government's decision to eliminate the cap-and-trade carbon tax—promise made, promise kept. It was a tax that was hidden, buried in the price at the pump. For someone like me who drives every day, whether to work, to visit constituents or to attend events that are important to my community, this makes a difference. Whether the NDP would like to admit it, there are many people who rely on vehicles to get them to work and to drive their children to hockey practice. It is simply not realistic to assume that everyone can accommodate their activities without the use of a vehicle, and they shouldn't be penalized for that in their pocket. Eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax will save the average family \$260 per year.

In addition to saving families money, the elimination of the tax will remove a cost burden from Ontario businesses, allowing them to grow, create jobs and compete in neighbouring jurisdictions. It is anticipated that through the cancellation of cap-and-trade and by reducing the fuel tax, Ontario will create an estimated 14,000 jobs. I think that's something to be proud of, and definitely something to look forward to. And we have done everything we can to ensure that no additional cap-and-trade carbon tax cost will be imposed on suppliers to avoid passing these costs down back to consumers.

The very next step that we took was to tackle Hydro One. Hydro One was the number one example of the mispending scandals and waste that defined the Liberals' time in government. While struggling families were stuck choosing between heating and eating, connected insiders were getting rich off of taxpayer money, giving themselves bigger and bigger pay packages. Nothing angered the public more, certainly in Etobicoke Centre.

During the election, we promised we would clean up the hydro mess and restore accountability and trust in Ontario's energy system. On August 16, we were pleased to announce that the Hydro One CEO, along with the rest of the old hydro board, was dismantled. Our government has appointed a new 10-person board. They are ready to get to work on getting Hydro One back on track. The Hydro One Accountability Act will ensure that these shady practices played under the Liberals will never happen again under any administration. Hydro One will also be required to annually publish on its public website a record of the total annual compensation paid. Hydro One can now play a constructive role in Ontario's electricity system as our

government works to bring hydro bills down for the people of this province, making life more affordable.

We could not address electricity rates without repealing the Green Energy Act. Under the last government, energy rates tripled, hurting families and driving manufacturing jobs outside of Ontario.

One of the first actions we took as government was to cancel 758 expensive and wasteful energy projects as a part of our plan to cut hydro rates by 12% for the people of Ontario, saving \$790 million for electricity customers. The original Green Energy Act led to the disastrous feed-in tariff program and skyrocketing electricity rates for Ontario families. It took the power away from municipalities and townships to stop expensive and unprecedented energy projects in their communities.

All the Green Energy Act did was help Liberal insiders get rich while families across Ontario were forced to choose between heating their homes and putting food on their tables. The Green Energy Act made it harder for businesses in Ontario to stay in business. Thousands of jobs were lost across Ontario because manufacturing plants were too expensive to operate.

Our legislation has given government the authority to stop approvals for wasteful energy projects where the need for electricity has not been demonstrated. This would put the brakes on additional projects that would add costs to electricity bills that the people of Ontario simply cannot afford. After years of skyrocketing electricity rates, your hydro bills will finally start coming down, making life more affordable in Ontario.

What I'm particularly happy about is eliminating unnecessary red tape, like the outdated Drive Clean program, which no longer was effective. In the past, Drive Clean was effective at reducing vehicle pollution. However, industry standards have significantly improved since the program was created in 1999. This has resulted in a steady decrease of passenger cars that fail the emissions test. As such, the Drive Clean program no longer effectively provides value for taxpayers. As a result of this decision, taxpayers will avoid costs of upwards of \$40 million annually. This government is making sure that every taxpayer dollar counts by improving programs that help target the biggest polluters and protect Ontario's air.

It's evident that in the last four months we've been exceptionally busy—exceptionally busy making life more affordable for the taxpayer. Now we're keeping our promise to make life more affordable for the residents of northern Ontario. I've never been to northern Ontario myself. I hear many wonderful things from my colleagues on this side. I cannot believe how challenging it was for residents in northern communities in terms of access to affordable natural gas.

During the election, our Premier and our party heard from the people. We heard how important access to natural gas is—key to business growth and job creation. Our action on this will ensure that the benefits of natural gas expansion are shared throughout the province, especially in northern Ontario. I will repeat it again: The proposed

natural gas expansion program will result in savings between \$800 and \$2,500 per year for a residential customer.

Madam Speaker, I know that every cent matters to the people of Ontario. It all adds up in the end, helping to make life more affordable, not to mention the positive impact that the changes will make to business growth in the province. This new program will help encourage more private gas distributors to partner with communities to develop projects that expand access to affordable and efficient natural gas.

Access to natural gas will have positive ramifications on the rural community. The Access to Natural Gas Act, if passed, will help ensure agricultural competitiveness of our rural economy. Our rural community includes 50,000 farms, which amounts to \$106 billion to the province's GDP. Ensuring this industry continues to thrive in Ontario is key to the province's economic vitality.

1000

The changes we are making are incredibly important to the prosperity and growth of this province. Now, I may be young, but there is one thing I know for certain: Jobs and a strong economy are the foundation to prosperity and success. The era of the previous Liberal government was a dark one. I could not understand why a government that so often claimed it was the only suitable option for Ontarians imposed terrible policies that only resulted in hurting job creation and growth.

During the campaign trail, every single small business owner I spoke to told me that they were hurting, not because they weren't working hard enough or providing a great service, but because the government was making it impossible for them to succeed. These business owners employ people. They are responsible for our local economies, and they were in trouble. It was shameful. Our side of the House wasn't afraid to listen, and over the last four months we weren't afraid to take on fixing all of these challenges. We are determined to restore economic prosperity to this province. Expanding natural gas access will make Ontario communities more attractive for job creation and new businesses. This is part of our government's plan to bring quality jobs back to Ontario and send a clear message that Ontario is open for business.

Now, many of you may be wondering why a member from Toronto, one who has never been to northern Ontario—but I will be going, I assure you—volunteered to speak to this bill. Part of it was, of course, to congratulate Minister McNaughton for his great work on this file and to acknowledge all of his staff that worked tirelessly to execute it. But the reason why this is so important to me is because not only is making life more affordable for the constituents of Etobicoke Centre and the residents of all of Ontario a priority, but because I believe that a government has a responsibility not to overregulate, but rather to create an environment in which businesses can prosper. This bill does exactly that.

On April 6, I stood before 400 of my constituents, alongside the Premier, at my campaign office, where I made a promise to the people of my riding that we would bring prosperity to Ontario by making it open for business.

It was a positive message. It gave everyone hope and a sense of relief that help was on its way. I am proud to be a part of that. We may not always get it right, but we are going to work damn hard until we do.

I hope even the members opposite will consider supporting this bill. I want to thank the minister again. This is a job well done, and I look forward to hearing what my colleagues have to say.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jamie West: I want to begin by congratulating my colleague from York South–Weston on his inaugural speech. It was amazing. It reminds me of the importance, when we're sitting in here—it's too bad you don't see it very well on the cameras. Across from me is an eagle. Across from the government is an owl. The reminder for the government is the owl, to make wise decisions. The reminder for us is to be critical and eagle-eyed to improve the—

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Ever vigilant.

Mr. Jamie West: Ever vigilant. Thank you. I think it's important that you mind that the owl doesn't mean you are always wise. It means that you have to make wise decisions. There's room for improvement, continuous improvement.

When I think of just the inaugural speech and the examples that we learned from the member from York South–Weston—from Somalia to Rome to Winnipeg and then into Toronto; racialized experience, and public transport that takes three hours to get to work. Where I live, if you lived three hours away, you wouldn't work in my city. You would live in some other city. Those different experiences are important. If you exclude them, if you block your eyes, you're not going to make wise decisions. You are not going to grow from it.

When we make criticism, it's not to tear down what you are doing; it's to improve and make it better for all of Ontario. When we say, "Let's make sure that the bill includes rural, Indigenous and northern Ontario," that's important.

The member from Etobicoke Centre talked about never being to northern Ontario, and then earlier in the same conversation said the NDP don't realize that people need to travel by car. You're telling me, from Sudbury, that I don't know that? Or from Nickel Belt or Thunder Bay or Mushkegowuk, that we don't know about travelling by car? Of course we do. We need to listen to each other and understand, and not just throw barbs. I apologize if it comes across the wrong way. I'm just saying, we need to listen.

If we care about drivers, then let's walk the talk. Let's support the member from Oshawa's Bill 43. Let's remove the unfair tolls from Highway 412 and the future tolls that could be on Highway 418. That's what we need to do. We need to work together for continuous improvement, where an auto is right on either side.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jim McDonnell: It's a privilege to get up to comment on the member from Etobicoke Centre. It was a great speech where she talked about all the benefits of natural gas and a party that's listening. We've heard for years and

years from the previous government how this was going to happen, but of course it never did.

I go back to a business in my riding that had tried for years to get natural gas. This goes back about 15 years ago when I was on council. When they finally put it through, in the time of not getting it to the time he got it, he lost about half a million dollars in costs by not having natural gas and having to use propane.

St. Mary's Centre, a community centre in our area, had received natural gas just a couple of years ago. They were expecting some savings, not expecting it to be a lot, but their bill went down by 50%. They were saving over \$8,000 a year by getting natural gas over oil, and of course the convenience that goes along with that. It shows the savings. In rural Ontario, those are big. We need to catch up.

We have a system of electrification that went through with the telephone. That was all based on a subsidy back when urban areas were able to get it much cheaper. That subsidized electrification and the telephone throughout this country. I remember back in the mid-1980s, we were considered to have the best telephone system in the world because of the full access and the quickness. That was all to do with the system we had in place.

So, moving towards this system with the natural gas, the previous government was going to fund 10 projects, which really didn't touch anything. This is going to take 70 communities, so it's a great project. We're looking forward to this. I'm looking, finally, to get natural gas. You know, it's just another example of a promise made, promise kept.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Mr. Jeff Burch: I would first of all like to congratulate my friend from York South–Weston for an excellent inaugural speech. It's just incredible the journey that he has made to come to this country and have such great success, so congratulations to him.

I listened to the member from Etobicoke Centre taking a very wide berth on the subject of gas distribution. First of all, hydro: Let's understand that the privatization of hydro is the main cause of the energy prices that we're struggling with. The Conservatives passed the legislation to privatize our hydro and the Liberals carried through with their plan to further privatize it. That is the struggling we're dealing with when it comes to energy.

The Green Energy Act that the member touched on: It's not perfect, but let's stop pretending that the whole thing was garbage. With the Green Energy Act, there were parts of it that were very good. There were parts of it that were creating jobs and creating business. This government, by going back on contracts, destroyed those jobs and created layoffs in our communities. People who install doors and windows and others—we have all kinds of businesses across the province who suffered because of that short-sighted decision.

Let's also remember that this government has absolutely no plan to deal with the environment. That is incredible to me, Speaker, that a government in this day and age in North America—I believe they're the only one—would

have no plan to deal with the environment. I don't know how you go from this House back to your community, talk to your children and say that you have no plan in this day and age to deal with the environment so that they have a planet to live on. There are a lot of people who are older in this House; we're not going to be around in 20 or 30 years, but our children will. For a government, in this day and age, to have no plan is absolutely disgusting.

1010

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Questions and comments?

Ms. Christine Hogarth: Thank you for letting me add my comments to today's discussion. I just want to comment on my colleague from Etobicoke Centre. We campaigned on making life more affordable for people. I know that when we were all knocking on doors—life has been harder. Life has been harder for the last many years, and that's why this government was voted in. Relief is here for people.

I say it's a good start with Bill 32 and our cap-and-trade act because under the Liberal government energy rates tripled, hurting families and driving manufacturing jobs out of Ontario. We sat at committee yesterday and we talked about these manufacturing jobs that were leaving our communities and leaving small-town, rural Ontario. Where does that leave your children? It leaves your children without jobs in the future. We have to make sure that Ontario is open for business by cutting these prices down and by giving people the opportunity to have choice in the way they want to fuel their businesses.

I have lived in northern Ontario. I lived in Thunder Bay, I lived in Sudbury and I lived in Sault Ste. Marie. Heating is not a luxury. When we were growing up, at Hallowe'en time we had to make sure our Hallowe'en costumes fit over our snowsuits. That was just how it was. So heating is not a luxury. Today in Toronto we may have a little frost on the ground, but I know, where I grew up, in Thunder Bay, there was a snowstorm last weekend. So heating is not a luxury in some of these northern and rural communities. We need to give people the choice so they can afford to heat their homes and they don't need to choose between eating and heating. That's just unfair.

We need a government that is responsible in making these tough decisions to ensure that the people moving forward have jobs, can create new jobs and can afford to feed their families.

Other things this government is doing over the last 100-and-some-odd days—I think we are at 112 now. We have ensured that we are creating an environment and that we are open for business in Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you. I return to the member from Etobicoke Centre for her remarks.

Miss Kinga Surma: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you to my colleague Christine Hogarth, the member from Etobicoke–Lakeshore, and I want to thank the members opposite, the member from Sudbury, and the member from Stormont–Dundas–South Glengarry for his feedback and his comments.

I believe I got into politics for all the right reasons. During the nomination, post-nomination and leading up to the campaign, I canvassed every single day. Every single day, I was at the doors because I told myself I wanted to speak to every single person in their house at least—minimum—one time. That was a goal I set for myself. What really hurt me was how many families were coming to me and saying, "I've worked hard my whole life. I have a decent job. My husband has a good job. We've started a family here in Etobicoke; it's a great community. But every year it's getting harder and harder, and our salaries are not keeping up with all of these costs and all of these fees and all of these taxes." It was absolutely heart-breaking.

Our message was loud and clear during the election. This was something we saw across the board happening in every single part of the province: Affordability was a key issue. I am so pleased with our team and with the Premier. Everything we are doing is going to make life more affordable for the people of this province. We're going to do that, and we have started doing that, by lowering hydro bills, eliminating the cap-and-trade carbon tax, lowering gas prices and eliminating the unnecessary Drive Clean program. The next step forward is that we're going to focus on making sure our businesses have the resources, the environment and the tools they need to succeed in this province. We're going to get rid of overregulation. We have a wonderful minister and a great caucus that are working incredibly hard.

Second reading debate deemed adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): It being 10:15, this House stands recessed until 10:30.

The House recessed from 1015 to 1030.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I wish to call the members' attention to the fact that we have with us in the Speaker's gallery a delegation of members of the Committee on European Affairs from the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. They are led by Mr. Tomáš Hanzel, the vice-president of the Chamber of Deputies. Please join me in welcoming this delegation from the Czech Republic to our Legislature today.

Also in the Speaker's gallery, we are joined by the Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc. With him are two of his staff, Ryan Dunn and Vincent Hughes. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Mr. Speaker, not often do we have somebody come down from Timmins, but from the realtors we have Michel Blais, who is here all the way from the city of Timmins in order to participate both at question period and during the debate today.

Ms. Jane McKenna: I'd like to welcome two realtors from Burlington, Sean Morrison and Bonnie Prior. Thank you for coming today.

Ms. Suze Morrison: I'd like to welcome to the Legislature today Farrah Khan, who is the manager of Consent

Comes First at Ryerson University. She is also the former co-chair of the round table on ending violence against women.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I also wanted to welcome Farrah Khan, a close friend of mine. We want to celebrate today that it's Persons Day for women, so I think it's appropriate to welcome her here. Thank you.

Mr. Dave Smith: I'd like to welcome an exceptional young gentleman from the city of Peterborough, a member of Adam Scott Intermediate School, today's page captain, Ian Williams.

Ms. Marit Stiles: It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the members' gallery today my mother, a resident of Ottawa–Vanier, Katherine Stiles.

Mr. Mike Schreiner: I welcomed over 100 CEOs in support of basic income in the media studio today. Some of them are joining us in the members' gallery: Audrey Mascarenhas; Floyd Marinescu; Sheila Regehr; Danny Tseng, who I think is on his way; Samir Nurmohamed, who is on his way; as well as Mike Garnett. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Robert Bailey: I've got two long-time friends and guests here, Mr. and Mrs. Andy and Betty Ruff, here from Sarnia–Lambton, at Queen's Park today.

Ms. Goldie Ghamari: I know they've already been introduced, but I'd be remiss not to personally recognize and welcome the delegation from Czech Republic here today in the Speaker's gallery. We had a very productive meeting this morning on trade relations between Ontario and Czech Republic. I look forward to continuing that via email. Thank you and welcome.

Ms. Jill Dunlop: I'd like to introduce my constituents who are with me today visiting the Legislature: Courtney Ostic, Ryan Sher, Ashlynn Hill, Paula Couter and Cindy Ferguson. Thank you for making the commute here today.

Mr. Parm Gill: I want to welcome grade 12 students from my great riding of Milton. They are coming from Bishop Reding Catholic Secondary School. They'll be joining us here in the gallery for a few minutes later on.

Mrs. Amy Fee: I'd like to welcome a long-time supporter and volunteer of mine, Rob Shatzky.

Mrs. Gila Martow: I want to welcome Ori Barda from Netivot HaTorah Jewish day school in Thornhill, as well as his dad, Ilan Barda. Welcome and bruchim habaim.

Hon. Steve Clark: Speaker, I want to introduce to you, and through you to members of the Legislative Assembly, a visitor from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She's the mother of one of my very valued staff, Hannah Anderson. Please welcome Dianne Anderson to Queen's Park. Welcome.

Hon. Jim Wilson: It's my pleasure to introduce to the House the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, the federal Minister of Intergovernmental and Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, my counterpart at the federal level. Welcome, Minister.

SIGN-LANGUAGE INTERPRETATION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I recognize the member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound on a point of order.

Mr. Bill Walker: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding ASL services during statements by the ministry this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound is seeking unanimous consent of the House to move a motion regarding ASL services this afternoon during private members' business. Agreed?

I recognize the member.

Mr. Bill Walker: I move that sign-language interpreters may be present on the floor of the chamber today to interpret statements by the ministry and responses.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Bruce–Grey–Owen Sound has moved a motion. Agreed? Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Ottawa–Vanier is seeking the unanimous consent of the House to put forward a motion regarding private members' public business. Agreed? Was there a no?

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Okay, agreed. The member may proceed.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c), a change be made to the order of precedence for private members' public business such that Ms. Wynne assumes ballot item number 39; myself, Nathalie Des Rosiers, assumes ballot item 51; and Mr. Gravelle assumes ballot number 79.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Madame Des Rosiers has moved that, notwithstanding standing order 98(c)—

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Dispense? Okay. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): We passed the motion.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Timmins on a point of order.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Just for the House in the future, when moving points of order, it would be good that they state in the request what it's about, because it's pretty wide open when it's just moved the way that it was. So, "I want to move a unanimous consent motion regarding the switching of ballots during private members'," just so we're clear what we're going to be voting on.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you very much.

It is now time for oral questions and I recognize the leader of the official opposition.

1040

ORAL QUESTIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I first want to just acknowledge that today is Persons Day. Back in 1927, the Famous Five began the journey to making sure that women became identified as equal persons to men in our country.

On that note, Speaker, I want to direct my question to the Acting Premier. Does the Acting Premier believe that a woman fleeing domestic violence should be able to take a day off to get her kids to some counselling without fear of losing her job?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Thank you for the question. I am going to take a leap of faith and assume that you are talking about a recent change to the round table. I don't think that there is a member in this chamber who would ever suggest that workplace violence in our schools, in our classrooms or in our homes is appropriate. We all need to work together on this issue. It is non-partisan, and we need to get past the throwing of knives back and forth and actually work together.

In the supplementary, I'd like to highlight some of the important work that we have been doing on our side.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Unfortunately, the minister made the wrong leap. We actually already have worked together to try to make a difference for women who are facing domestic violence. It's called changes to Bill 148 that are currently in place, where a woman now is able to leave the workplace in order to deal with the domestic violence that she's facing, to try to help her to ensure that she and her children are safe. Those protections are one of the many hard-earned rights that the Premier has pledged to tear up when he strips the protections from Ontarians' Employment Standards Act.

Can the Acting Premier explain how a woman taking time off work to protect her family is bad for our economy?

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Minister of Labour.

Hon. Laurie Scott: I appreciate the question from the Leader of the Opposition. I think all parties in the past have brought forward motions, have supported private members' bills and have had great discussions in the Legislature on what more we can do to protect women against violence and to get to places that can help them leave those difficult situations.

The Leader of the Opposition is referring to Bill 148. We have said that we are reviewing Bill 148. I've had many, many meetings with a variety of stakeholders, including associations that represent people who are fleeing from domestic violence—women's associations, shelters etc. We will be bringing information soon, this fall, to the Legislature on those discussions.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: I just want to say that most employers that I talk to want to see those protections remain in place. It's not just a matter of all of those fantastic women's organizations that are supportive and helping women to escape these kinds of situations, but most employers that I talk to want to see those particular protections remain in place.

The law is designed to make sure that every woman actually has that protection if she needs it, which is what leads to one question: Who is asking the government—if there is anybody, we would like to know—to take away the provisions in the Employment Standards Act that enable women to leave work when they're fleeing domestic violence? What I'm hearing from the employers' side is they are not interested in having that happen.

Hon. Laurie Scott: The Leader of the Opposition is correct. I think collectively, as a society, we've been able to shine more light on the fact that there's a large increase of women being affected by violence and it should not be tolerated in any situation—in the home, in the workplace or anywhere. I myself, when I was in opposition, passed many bills to try to protect women. We continue to believe in that on this side of the House.

As I said, I have met with a variety of stakeholders and individual people. All of our caucus colleagues have heard from people in their ridings about the increasing violence against women and the need to do more. So to the Leader of the Opposition: We will have more to say on that in the days to come.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Ms. Andrea Horwath: My next question is for the Acting Premier. The Financial Accountability Office revealed earlier this week that \$500 million in cap-and-trade spending has not actually been cancelled, but the Ford government refused to reveal where the money is now going. Can the Acting Premier tell us why the government won't share that information?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of the Environment.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: Thank you for the question. The FAO report did make a number of things clear, including—and I will speak to the member's question—but it made clear, principally, that Ontarians were going to save \$264 per family. It made clear that the estimates we've made around the wind-down of the credit market of \$5 million in costs were accurate. And it made clear, shockingly to some, that the total cost of a federal carbon tax would be close to \$650 per family.

It also talked about the orderly wind-down. As we have discussed, we will be winding down certain programs. Other programs, including transit and housing programs, will be continuing. These are the sorts of programs that were spoken about in our platform, the important transit changes that are being made in the GTA and otherwise. When the entire program is wrapped up, which will happen at the end of October—for example, when the wind-downs program, which is part of the orderly wind-down,

has happened—there will be further reporting on the details.

But Mr. Speaker, I think the important part of the FAO report was saying that the government was on track in terms of returning money to Ontarians and on track in terms of winding down cap-and-trade.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Families have heard promises from governments before, and they've also seen governments refuse to be clear about the facts. What they heard from the Financial Accountability Office this week was they will be paying more; the government is adding \$3 billion to the debt; there is no climate plan; and their own government is refusing to tell them where half a billion dollars is now going.

Why is the government not being up front, clear and transparent with the FAO and Ontario families?

Hon. Rod Phillips: I'm not sure what plan or what the Leader of the Opposition was reading, but what was clear was that the government had been very specific. We had said that we would have an orderly wind-down of the program; that is happening. We had said that there would be a \$5-million charge for the wind-down of the credit market—a market that the Leader of the Opposition had said would cost \$4 billion. No doubt it would have cost \$4 billion if the Leader of the Opposition had had the chance to make it cost that much. They also said very clearly that \$264 will be saved by families and that a Trudeau carbon tax will cost \$650.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, as the programs are wound down, we will make sure that Ontarians, unlike the previous government, see where the money has gone and they see that cap-and-trade is gone and that a carbon tax doesn't replace it.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Final supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, what the minister still refuses to do is what he refused to do, or what the government has refused to do, in terms of a query from the FAO, which is disclose where this half a billion dollars is now going. Families have heard promises from governments before, and they've also seen governments scramble to hide the facts. What they heard from the FAO very clearly, earlier this week, is that they will be paying more. The government is adding \$3 billion to the debt. There is no climate plan. And their own government is refusing to tell them where half a billion dollars is going.

Why is this government not being up front and transparent with the FAO and Ontario families?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, because the Leader of the Opposition has given me the chance, we are, of course, going to have a climate plan. We were clear in the campaign that we would have a climate plan. We were clear, when we cancelled the failed climate plan, that we would have a climate plan. We were clear when we introduced Bill 4 that there would be a climate plan.

Now Ontarians can give us contributions to that at ontario.ca/climatechange, where we're collecting information on the climate plan.

But let's be clear: The NDP have not been at all transparent when it comes to their plans. That's why you had a

\$7 billion hole in your budget plan. When we talk about \$3 billion less in revenue, that's \$3 billion less of government programs for you. That's \$3 billion in Ontarians' pockets, where we think the money should be spent.

1050

MERCURY POISONING

Ms. Andrea Horwath: This is my final question in this series and it's to the Acting Premier. Earlier this week, my colleague in this House, the member for Kiiwetinoong, rose to remark on the life of the late former chief of Grassy Narrows, Steve Fobister Sr. I wouldn't mind taking a moment to add to my colleague's comments. I mourn his loss and I give my deepest sympathies to the community as well.

The former chief died due to complications from Minamata disease—mercury poisoning—that he had been living with for decades. Does the government acknowledge that former chief Steve Fobister Sr. suffered from the effects of mercury poisoning and that this is what contributed to his death?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Indigenous Affairs.

Hon. Greg Rickford: As I rose in this place some days ago, Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to reflect on a person I've known for almost two decades, sitting across the table from him in my law office in Kenora. I had a chance to admire and respect a man whose legacy is without comparison. From a small northern community, he led the charge not just for issues for his community, opportunities for Treaty 3, but also with respect to mercury contamination.

Most recently, a week or so ago, my friend the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, visited the community. He had an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to the work that needs to be done on the English River system. I had been there prior to ensure that beneficiaries from that pension would be fully indexed and retroactive. We're doing that to honour his commitment and his legacy, but also to hopefully close a dark chapter in Ontario's history.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Andrea Horwath: Well, Speaker, to the shame of successive governments, former chief Fobister and the people of Grassy Narrows had to go across the ocean in order to get help and recognition for the mercury poisoning they suffered from. Experts determined that 94% of the population of Grassy Narrows suffered from and continue to suffer from the debilitating effects of exposure to mercury. Yet the majority of the community suffering from mercury disease still doesn't receive any compensation through the Mercury Disability Board, a board, as we all know, that was set up for that very purpose.

Will the government commit to updating the Mercury Disability Board so that all Grassy Narrows community members suffering from the effects of mercury exposure can receive the full and fair compensation that they so rightfully deserve?

Hon. Greg Rickford: I should also mention that we had an opportunity to spend some quality time with Chief

John Paishk from Wabaseemoong. All too often it gets lost in the discussion that members of that community were affected and of course comprise a critical mass of the people on that pension.

Mr. Speaker, it was a significant policy advancement to index those pensions for the people who had been recognized by medical experts historically as having been impacted by the contamination. I know, in visiting with the community and celebrating in traditional ceremonies, that we had done the right thing to update a 30-year-old pension, ensure that it was done retroactively so those folks could experience an increase to reflect historical challenges with the pension and, moving forward, would have a fully indexed pension from the mercury contamination.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: My question is to the Minister of Finance. We have been hearing a lot about fairness in the auto insurance system. The Liberals and the NDP have talked a big game on auto insurance, but time and time again, we saw that it was followed up by no action.

It's clear that the Liberal-NDP system of failed stretch goals on auto insurance is broken. The private member's bill introduced on Monday by the member from Milton would, if passed, move us forward in developing an auto insurance system that is fair and serves the needs of drivers across Ontario.

Could the minister please explain the importance of this initiative and how our caucus is working to ensure that Ontarians can benefit from an auto insurance system that treats the people of Ontario fairly?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Scarborough–Rouge Park for that question. Once again, I want to take a moment to congratulate the member from Milton on his initiative.

His bill, if passed, would end auto insurance discrimination by scrapping the outdated territory system and preventing auto insurance companies from discriminating by using someone's postal code or area code, and it does so in a responsible, practical manner. The rationale behind this bill is simple: A good driver in Brampton should pay similar rates to what a good driver in Ottawa pays today.

With this bill, if passed, there will be more consumer choice, fairness, and a local focus on personal responsibility. I look forward to continuing to work with the member from Milton on this initiative.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you to the minister for his answer. It's clear that the member from Milton brought forward a thoughtful approach that looks at this issue with a province-wide lens and which, if passed, would ensure there would not be unintended consequences for drivers in other parts of the province.

It does not appear that the same can be said of the member from Brampton East. After taking some time to review the bill he put forward in the House, it seems clear that it would have the opposite effect. In fact, there appear to be major concerns that his bill would raise rates on Ontarians

in other parts of the GTA. Can the minister please elaborate on these concerns?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Once again, thank you to the member for that question. As I said yesterday in this House, the NDP member from Brampton East wants the GTA to be considered a single geographic area when insurance companies set their rates. However, this will serve only to increase insurance costs across the entire GTA. In fact, the member's plan would cause rates to rise in many of his caucus colleagues' own ridings.

On the other hand, our member from Milton got this right. He took the time to consult, to listen and to develop a plan that will deliver real fairness to the system. If passed, all drivers across all of Ontario will benefit from the thoughtful plan he put forward.

MINISTER'S CONDUCT

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Minister of Community Safety. As the minister should know, the OPP's economic crime and corruption unit has been conducting an investigation concerning a waterfront cottage owned by Vaughan council candidate Eliana Di Biase. The OPP are investigating links between work done on this cottage by contractors and over \$150 million in contracts granted by Mrs. Di Biase's husband to those same contractors.

Speaker, the Minister of Community Safety is responsible for the OPP, and he knows that his office should be above and beyond reproach. Yet he has been actively campaigning for Mrs. Di Biase throughout this municipal election. Why does the minister responsible for the OPP think that it's appropriate to be campaigning for a candidate who is currently at the centre of an OPP investigation?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Mr. Speaker, first of all I want to make it clear that I am here as a member of the Legislature. This morning I did send a letter to the individual in question, as it has been brought to my attention that she has been using my photo on her campaign brochure.

1100

As a recently elected member of Parliament, I understand that emotions and activity levels run high in the heat of a campaign and that, at times, an overenthusiastic volunteer might take steps which are inappropriate or unapproved by some of the individuals involved. I understand that this may be the case in this instance.

Be that as it may, I've stated publicly on several occasions that it is not my intent to endorse any single candidate during the municipal election.

I do, however, commend every candidate who has chosen to put their name forward on a ballot and run in a democratic process to work for the people.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Restart the clock.

Supplementary.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, I believe that the minister has just acknowledged a disturbing pattern that we've seen by the members of the crown on the other side.

First, we have a Premier who has been seen campaigning for neo-Nazi sympathizers. Now we have a minister responsible for the OPP campaigning for—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The House will come to order.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The government benches will come to order.

I'm going to caution the member for Essex on the use of intemperate language. I will recognize him to put his question.

Restart the clock.

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, again, I've spoken to a disturbing pattern that we've seen and the potential conflict of interest in the offices of the ministers and the Premier himself.

My question is, simply, how can the minister think that it's appropriate and responsible for him to be campaigning for a candidate who's at the centre of an OPP investigation?

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Mr. Speaker—

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Order.

Hon. Michael A. Tibollo: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

As I mentioned, I commend every candidate who has put forward their names on a ballot to stand up and ask the citizens of municipalities across the province to give them a chance to serve as an elected representative. For those who are successfully elected, it will mean years of difficult, important work to be done on behalf of deserving, hard-working citizens.

I, myself, benefited by growing up in a community and a province and a nation served by politicians of fortitude and integrity. The society these great men and women helped build provided me, my family and millions of other people a safe and prosperous place to grow and learn and work and raise a family of their own.

While I cannot predict the future, it is my strong hope that each of the candidates who are successful in the upcoming municipal elections will want to work collectively to do the best for the province and for their municipalities.

TAXATION

Mr. Daryl Kramp: My question today is for the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks.

Regularly, like many of my colleagues, our constituents contact our office with concerns regarding the cap-and-trade carbon tax. They struggle to understand how it is improving the environment, and they're uncertain as to the costs that they will eventually have to bear.

But there are several things that they are quite aware of. They are familiar with the difficulty of putting food on the table or paying one's hydro bill. And it's surely not too

hard to figure out their concern if they have enough gas to make it home from work. They feel the burden that the cap-and-trade carbon tax has placed on them.

Mr. Speaker, the people need to know, we all need to know, how Ontarians will be impacted should any kind of carbon tax ever be imposed on them.

Hon. Rod Phillips: Thank you to the member from Hastings-Lennox and Addington for the question. All Ontarians do deserve to know what the costs of the cap-and-trade program would have been and the potential costs for the Trudeau carbon tax. That was made clear by the FAO in his report: \$312 a year would have been the cost by 2022 of the Liberal cap-and-trade program. That's one of the reasons that we got rid of it. But more concerning today is that \$648 by 2022 will be the cost of a Trudeau carbon tax.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to our visitor in the gallery, I'm not sure what they're smoking up in Ottawa, but this is not going to fly with Ontarians. This isn't a program that they want. This isn't a tax that they want. This isn't something that the people of Ontario or the people of Canada can afford.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Daryl Kramp: Mr. Speaker, through you and back to the minister: I certainly am very pleased that our guest is here to hear our comments today. Thank you for helping us understand the impact of a carbon tax and what it will have on Canadians.

As we all know, as I've stated before and most of us have experienced, many, many Canadians are struggling with making ends meet due to the rising costs. I know my constituents are so pleased that they finally elected a government that truly understands and will listen to their concerns. Yet, over and over again, at various levels, we see the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Green Party rise in this House in support of a cap-and-trade tax—another tax. The FAO report confirms our deepest concerns: The carbon tax will take money out of the pockets of every Canadian.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of the Environment describe to us why this regressive cap-and-trade carbon tax program will not work for Ontarians?

Hon. Rod Phillips: Mr. Speaker, through you to the member: I am going to take another opportunity because, as I've promised, we are putting a plan forward that will work for Ontarians. We're looking for their input at ontario.ca/climatechange.

To the question: Clearly, as the Auditor General had said when she talked about cap-and-trade as an ineffective tax, poorly conceived, that would ship hundreds of millions of dollars out of the country, cap-and-trade was not going to work. The question, I think, to the opposition party, is a good one. The NDP member from Ottawa Centre advocates a \$150-a-tonne carbon tax. Let's put that into terms people can understand: That's a 35-cent-a-litre increase in gasoline.

Our elimination of cap-and-trade has already cut gas prices by almost 5 cents. We will cut it by a further 5 cents. But that gas tax increase is \$4,100 for the average—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you.

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION

Mr. Taras Natyshak: My question is to the Acting Premier. We've just received some pretty shocking breaking news. Can the Acting Premier confirm that the Premier's former campaign tour director has been now appointed as the Ontario trade representative in Washington and will be getting an almost \$75,000 pay hike over his predecessor, which would actually leave him earning more than Canada's current ambassador to the United States?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Economic Development and Trade.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Thank you to the honourable member for the question. Actually, Ian Todd will be appointed October 22 to be our trade representative in Washington and a special additional role that the previous representative in Washington didn't have, as a special adviser to the Premier. His compensation will be very comparable to what Monique Smith, the previous representative, was making. Monique Smith, in addition—

Interjections.

Hon. Jim Wilson: Listen to this—in addition to her salary, she was receiving pension contributions and a one-year severance. Mr. Todd will not be receiving that.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

1110

Mr. Taras Natyshak: Speaker, apparently, the Ford gravy train has arrived at Queen's Park and it's all aboard. It's all aboard, if you've been a member. This is insane.

Most Ontarians would be lucky to earn \$75,000 a year, never mind getting a \$75,000 bump in pay. Media reports today indicate that Ian Todd, a former campaign adviser, is going to be representing Ontario in Washington and that he'll be taking home more than the Canadian ambassador.

How does this government justify handing a Conservative insider this job and paying him \$75,000 more than the person he's replacing?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members take their seats. Order. The opposition benches will come to order. Minister?

Hon. Jim Wilson: Once again, we see NDP math. Can't you understand over there? He's getting a salary like Monique Smith did, but he's not getting pension contributions or a one-year severance.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, we fired the consultants and we fired the lawyers. The retainers are gone, and that office will be saving \$710,000, clearing Mr. Todd's rate.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order on the government benches.

Start the clock. Next question.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: Ma question est pour la procureure générale.

A couple of weeks ago, the day after the testimony of Christine Blasey Ford at the Brett Kavanaugh US Senate confirmation hearing, two different women came into my constituency office and confided in me that they'd been sexually assaulted in the past. This disclosure happens often when there are—it's the essence of the #MeToo movement, essentially, because disclosure triggers memories.

I referred them to the rape crisis centre and, in the context of my conversation with the rape crisis centre after that, they explained to me that they had not received confirmation of the funding from the Attorney General for the services of legal advice and accompaniment for survivors of sexual assault.

Can the minister confirm to this House that she plans to continue to help survivors of sexual violence access the legal system?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I thank the member opposite for the question, and I want to express the fact of my view and the view of this government that we feel for the women who came to you. We encourage all women who are experiencing violence to come. They were incredibly brave to come to you and tell you their stories.

Our government believes that all Ontarians should live free from violence and the threat of violence. That is why we take the programs that our ministries offer to keep Ontarians free and to help them through the justice system—we take those programs very seriously. We're looking at them because we want to make sure that they are delivering the services in an effective and efficient way, so that they can actually provide the real help and services that the women need.

I am committed to looking at all those programs across our government. We are all doing that. We will have more to say on that in the future.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: I think there's a certain urgency for them to get to know what the answer is, and that was the point of my question.

I just want to say as well that today is Persons Day in Canada. We celebrate the historic decision that women are persons and therefore could be appointed to the Senate. Indeed, we celebrate this day because we celebrate the importance of ensuring a voice of women in politics, but also in policy-making.

I understand that the minister wants to respond adequately to violence against women and to respond to policy gaps that exist. To empower women to be part of the policy process is really important in the context of violence against women, and because individual women who have experienced violence sometimes want privacy, governments in the past have often found it useful to seek the advice of organizations that work with women who have experienced violence.

Would the Attorney General consider the advice of the Barbra Schlifer Clinic, CALACS, and all the organizations that were part of the Roundtable on Violence Against Women? Would she admit to having one round table for her ministry to ensure the presence of the voice of survivors in policy-making?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to thank the member opposite for giving a voice to the women who came to her to bring their concerns to this House. I have had the opportunity to sit down directly with members of the Barbra Schlifer clinic, as well as other members representing individual organizations that do the important work that we need them to do. And I continue to do that. I know my colleague, the minister responsible for women, has also been doing that.

I will continue to the hold round tables and also to meet with organizations individually so that I can speak to them about their concerns as well as learn directly from them about the important work that they do. The work that they do in our province is valuable and we need to make sure we are funding those organizations that are doing that work, but we do so in an effective and efficient way so that we help the women who are in need.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Ms. Jane McKenna: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Yesterday, as a result of federal Liberal legislation, recreational cannabis became legal in the province of Ontario and across Canada. This coincided with the passage of our own government's legislation, Bill 36, which was the result of extensive consultation with municipalities, First Nations, police services and public health officials.

I was pleased to see our government continues to make the safety of our children and youth a top priority. There is no question that every decision our government makes with respect to cannabis must have the best interests of Ontario's children and youth top of mind.

Minister, could you please tell the House how safety continues to be the top priority in our government's plan for cannabis legislation?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I want to thank the member from Burlington for the question. It was our responsibility to develop a retail and distribution system that protects youth and combats the illegal market. Yesterday, the Ontario Cannabis Store retail website began to provide a safe, secure and reliable outlet for consumers 19 and over to purchase cannabis. I want to congratulate the hard-working men and women of the Ontario Cannabis Store for producing for the people of Ontario.

As cannabis is delivered to homes in Ontario, it will be incumbent upon those receiving those packages to provide valid ID proving they are 19 years of age or over to complete the transaction and receive the cannabis. The Ontario Cannabis Store's online channel is the only legal place in the province to buy recreational cannabis. This will be followed by a licensed private retail store in April 2019, and we continue to foster a healthy competition to combat the illegal—

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Thank you. Supplementary?

Ms. Jane McKenna: Thank you, Minister, for answering my question. It is clear that Ontario has put in place a robust system for the federal Liberal decision to legalize

cannabis. It is reassuring to see a system in place for cannabis legalization that prioritizes the safety of our communities and combats the illegal market. It's clear that this retail distribution system was designed to ensure that cannabis remains out of the hands of people under the age of 19.

Although I am confident our approach will not tolerate anybody sharing, selling or providing cannabis to anybody under the age of 19, I am concerned about players in the illegal market continuing to target our children and youth. Can the minister please inform the House about the resources our government is providing to combat the illegal market through enforcement against those operating outside the legal regime?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thanks again to the member for that question. Once again, ocs.ca is the only legal place to buy cannabis in the province of Ontario. Cannabis retail and dispensary stores operating in Ontario today are doing so illegally. The government has given the police the tools to shut down illegal cannabis store operators. Further, we'll be providing municipalities with \$40 million over two years to help with increased costs due to the federal government's decision to legalize cannabis. As of yesterday, illegal operators face significant fines and they will never be granted a licence to participate in the legal market.

1120

Since we began working towards building a distribution model to comply with the federal government's decision, we have been abundantly clear that there will be zero tolerance for those who operate outside of the law on cannabis or attempt to market to our youth.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ms. Suze Morrison: My question is to the Acting Premier. Prior to the election, the Conservatives promised to honour the gender-based violence plan that would have provided sexual assault centres across Ontario with a 33% funding increase. This much-needed funding would have enhanced services at existing centres and expanded programs to underserved communities.

Instead of supporting survivors, this government has broken its promise. Funding has not flowed, and this week we learned that the government has also dissolved Ontario's provincial Roundtable on Violence Against Women, prompting the resignation of co-chairs Farrah Khan and Pamela Cross.

As a sexual assault survivor myself, I find this government's actions both heartless and cruel. Why aren't survivors of gender-based violence a priority for this government?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Minister of Tourism.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: Look, as I said at the beginning of question period, there is no one in this chamber who understands and appreciates our role as legislators to protect women who have experienced violence in their homes, in their workplaces, in their schools—frankly, even in this chamber.

I want to reassure the member opposite that we very much appreciate the work that the co-chairs have done. It is unfortunate that they chose to resign. I don't know if that was a political decision. I'm not going to go there. What I am going to say is our minister and our government are 100% committed to make sure that the women in this province who have been abused in the workplace, in their homes, in their schools will get the help they need.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Stop the clock. Order. Start the clock.

Supplementary?

Ms. Suze Morrison: In the midst of the #MeToo movement, survivors are finally in a place where they can summon the courage to seek the supports that they need. The Hamilton sexual assault centre has seen a 100% increase in the calls to their crisis line in the past three years. Their wait-list for counselling is seven months long. The funding that they were promised would have allowed them to hire a full-time counsellor to address their increased demand.

Will this government honour the gender-based violence plan, release the funding that was already promised and immediately reinstate the provincial round table on ending violence against women?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Members please take their seats.

Minister.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: I know that my colleague is working hard on this issue. I know that as individual MPPs, we all hear from the shelters in our communities.

Look, we know that it has changed. The system has changed. We have people coming to shelters who have far more challenging issues than 20, 25 years ago. We cannot keep operating the same way and expect that we are going to solve this problem.

I want to remind the member, even though she was not here, that it was actually my colleague and friend the now-Minister of Labour who initiated the Select Committee on Sexual Violence and Harassment. We are actively engaged in this file. As I want to reiterate, we will get it right, and it's not just about doing the same old thing and expecting a different result.

CANNABIS REGULATION

Mr. Jim McDonell: My question is to the Attorney General. Yesterday, recreational cannabis became legal in Canada. This was a policy implemented by the federal government, one that was left to the provinces and municipalities to navigate.

I know our government has been working diligently since being elected to establish a plan to protect our children and combat the illegal market. I was glad, like many others across this province, to see these efforts result in yesterday's passage of Bill 36. I know this bill was based on wide-ranging consultations that were undertaken across the province, and it makes me proud to be part of a government that works hard to embody the voice of the people. I

also know that we heard from many stakeholders during the committee process on this bill who also shared support for the government's efforts in this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if the Attorney General can share with the House some of the feedback we received about the government's plan to address legalization and Bill 36.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to thank the member from Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry for the question. Over the past several months, our government has worked diligently with stakeholders across the province, including law enforcement, public health organizations, parents, municipalities, consumer groups, businesses, Indigenous organizations and other provinces with private retail models.

During our consultation process, we heard loud and clear that any plan on recreational cannabis needed to achieve three objectives: protect children, keep our roads and communities safe, and combat the illegal market. Well, Mr. Speaker, Bill 36 does just that.

But don't take my word for it. In a submission to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said, and I quote, "We are very encouraged by the overall direction that the government is taking on cannabis under Bill 36."

"The government ... has done a good job of highlighting the dangers of driving with cannabis and the importance of keeping cannabis out of the hands of young Ontarians."

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mr. Jim McDonell: I'd like to thank the Attorney General for the response. It's always welcome to hear that the government's plan has widespread support and has been developed in partnership with a wide range of industry experts and professionals.

I know the people in my riding will also be happy to know that our government takes its responsibilities very seriously and is working hard to keep their families and their communities safe.

The Attorney General has spoken at length about the importance of combating the illegal market and the role that a private retail system will have in achieving that. We know that the previous Liberal government's plan to establish a government-run retail model for cannabis would not have been effective in protecting children and communities by combatting the illegal market.

Mr. Speaker, I'm wondering if the Attorney General can share some of the feedback she received on the change of direction by our new government.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I'm happy to share that information. We chose to move ahead with a tightly regulated private retail model because the public model that had been proposed by the previous Liberal government and championed by some labour groups would be incapable of seriously competing with the illegal market.

Under the previous model, our communities would have been left more vulnerable and susceptible to the underground market. Instead, a tightly regulated private retail model was the preferred and only responsible choice in Ontario.

During committee, we heard from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce that, “The OCC supports Bill 36 and the government of Ontario’s commitment to developing a private retail model for the responsible sale of cannabis in licensed retailers....”

And, “that safety and social responsibility must be the first overwhelming priorities ... taking into account ... about the underground economy, health and safety.”

I’m pleased to say, Mr. Speaker, that Bill 36 achieves this for the people of Ontario.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Ms. Marit Stiles: My question is to the Minister of Education. Hundreds of parent groups and school councils from every school board across the province have been waiting patiently for a response from the ministry about the status of their applications for the Parents Reaching Out Grants. My office has been flooded with questions about what’s going on.

Yesterday, the minister stood here and admitted that this important parent engagement funding won’t be coming at all. Will the minister explain to these parents why the government couldn’t be bothered to inform them that this funding was never going to come?

1130

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: First of all, to the member opposite in the NDP, she needs to get it right and go back and check Hansard. I did not say that.

Furthermore, I think Ontario taxpayers will respect the fact that we’re being responsible. After 15 years of mismanagement and absolute nonsense that was created by the past Liberal administration, taxpayers in this province are supporting how we’re going through a line-by-line audit to make sure we’re getting the best result for the investment made.

As we hit the pause button to consult from one corner of this province to another, we are doing the right thing, because we have to identify the priorities from the people who are impacted. We need to ensure that the consultation carries on and that we fulfill every requirement we’ve set out so that our voices are heard and we have the right priorities going forward.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Mr. Speaker, through you again to the Minister of Education: You’ve actually said nothing. You’ve said nothing to parents at all. The only thing you’ve communicated is through this House when we asked you.

Parent and school councils have been blindsided by this government’s sudden cut to this program, and they deserve to know why. I’m going to give you some examples. One group was planning a series of free parenting workshops with a focus on well-being and mental, physical and sexual health, along with a lending library for parents. Another school had planned an event focused on STEM. They told me, “This school does not bring in a huge amount of funds from the community because our parents are living with

lots of everyday life costs. We have very little money to use towards trying to improve our student experience.”

Will the minister explain to these parents why supporting parent engagement in education ranked so low on their priority list, and will you restore the funding now?

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): It would seem an opportune time to remind all members to make their comments through the Chair.

Minister, response.

Hon. Lisa M. Thompson: My number one priority is ensuring that every single voice across this province is heard in terms of identifying and having a chance to say what matters to them.

We’re listening to the people and we’re moving forward for the parents specifically with our consultation. Fortheparents.ca is the place for people to exercise their voice. The opposition NDP are just trying to create chaos. The fact of the matter is, I am so proud of my team in the Ministry of Education. They are doing an amazing job, and we are hearing so much. The responses that we are getting from our written submissions based on the consultation are second to none.

Once again, to hear from the parents across this province, go to fortheparents.ca. Let your voice be heard.

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

Mrs. Robin Martin: My question is to the Minister of Finance. This week, the Select Committee on Financial Transparency began to hear from witnesses regarding the findings of the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry report. The committee heard from the Auditor General and senior public servants about the previous Liberal government’s accounting and financing schemes. These officials provided an overview of the decisions made and concerns raised about the Fair Hydro Plan and the details about the pension asset disagreement with the Auditor General. What we heard regarding the previous government’s treatment of Ontario’s books continues to shock.

Can the minister please share with this House his impressions of what the committee heard this week?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Thank you to the member from Eglinton–Lawrence for that question. We know that all members of this House have been watching the work of the select committee with great interest as it begins to look into the findings of the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry. The importance of this committee’s work in restoring accountability and trust cannot be understated.

It was alarming to learn from officials testifying before the committee that they repeatedly expressed worries about the Fair Hydro Plan to the previous government, only to be ignored.

The Auditor General was equally scathing during her testimony, saying that she would have left her client if she was a private sector auditor.

It’s clear that the previous government’s rate mitigation plan was a questionable scheme right from the start.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary?

Mrs. Robin Martin: Thank you to the minister for his answer.

Not only do we need to fix the financial problems we have inherited from the previous government, but we must also determine how the situation was ever allowed to get this bad.

As the committee continues its work, I know we remain committed to ensuring that the people of Ontario receive answers. The select committee will continue its work next week as we continue to learn more about the Liberals' accounting schemes, how they came to be and who made these decisions.

Can the minister please outline the importance of the committee's work to get answers for the people of Ontario?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: The committee continues to hear from important witnesses who will help them get to the bottom of how this happened and why.

We know that the advice of the Independent Financial Commission of Inquiry has been invaluable to our government. The Auditor General gave our government's public accounts their first clean bill of health in three years when the President of the Treasury Board tabled them last month.

Our government will continue to work to fix the mess left behind by 15 years of Liberal waste, mismanagement and scandal, and ensure that everything we do results in better government for the people.

We appreciate the work of the Select Committee on Financial Transparency and look forward to their report back to this House with their findings.

HORSE RACING INDUSTRY

Mr. Percy Hatfield: My question is to the Minister of Finance. Good morning, Minister. It was good to hear you talking about transparency.

This government has been making secret backroom deals with owners and operators of the horse racing tracks across Ontario. They've been doing this without consulting the communities, the workers or anyone else impacted by the deals. New Democrats have been asking in this House for the details only to find out that government has required everyone involved to sign non-disclosure agreements.

The public has a right to know what's happening to our racetracks. This government—so transparent. Why did this government demand a gag order to be placed on the details of the secret deals that they've struck with those racing operators?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: Our government has kept its commitment to bolster the horse racing industry and repair the damage done by the previous Liberal government, only made possible with the support of the NDP. Agreements in principle have now been reached to keep slots at Kawartha Downs and Ajax Downs, and to providing additional funding to continue horse racing in Fort Erie and Dresden. The commitment will directly support the horse racing industry and rural communities.

Our government has made a generous offer to these racetracks, including for the return of slots to Fort Erie and Dresden, but both made a business decision to accept enhanced funding instead.

Speaker, we continue to support this sector and support rural Ontario. The members opposite would do well to join us in that support.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary? The member for Niagara Falls.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Back to the Acting Premier: There is no clearer example of a backroom deal than the one that was made to keep the slots out of the Fort Erie Race Track. I was at closing day at the Fort Erie track on Tuesday, and everywhere I went, the same question: Why would the Premier break his promise to this town to return the slots and the jobs that come with them? To be honest, Mr. Speaker, we don't have the answer to that question because the Premier never consulted the town of Fort Erie or the residents.

My question is this: Will the Premier keep this government's promise to the town of Fort Erie and bring a meaningful number of slots to the racetrack, as well as the jobs that come with them?

Hon. Victor Fedeli: I'm very pleased to see that the NDP member opposite finally recognizes the importance of the horse racing industry, considering they supported the Liberals when they gutted the industry recently. The member may also want to take time to acknowledge the industry's real needs. We made a generous offer to return slots to Fort Erie, but the owner of the racetrack made a business decision to accept enhanced funding instead.

1140

We're committed to supporting the horse racing industry in Ontario, and we're listening to the needs of the industry stakeholders and, again, Speaker, the member opposite would be wise to listen as well.

MUNICIPALITIES

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Local Government Week is a reminder that municipal government is where many civic-minded people have their first experience with politics. Whether it's casting a ballot, volunteering to knock on doors in their community or running for office themselves, it's a great way to get politically engaged and to understand what public service is all about.

Many in this chamber actually started their political careers either with local council or with a local school board. In fact, I myself had my first political experience campaigning for local representatives at the young age of 14.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs: As a former mayor yourself, can you explain how that experience played a key role in how you got to where you are today?

Hon. Steve Clark: I want to thank the member for Ottawa West-Nepean for that excellent question. He's right. As a young person, I was very civic-engaged and I was very fortunate. It was a great honour for me, at the age of 22 in 1982, to be elected to represent the citizens of the

city of Brockville as their mayor. One thing that that experience taught me is that we, as elected officials, have to engage young people and encourage them to get involved in the local government process.

That's why, Speaker, Local Government Week is so important. It's a week that gives young people the opportunity to understand the importance of local government, to instill the importance of voting, especially in this election year. I firmly believe that by engaging young people, they'll be the next generation of local school board trustees, local councillors and local mayors.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Supplementary.

Mr. Jeremy Roberts: Thank you, Minister, for that answer. Your life of public service is certainly one that sets a fine example for any young person interested in getting involved in politics.

Election day is next Monday, October 22, and it's great that this year's Local Government Week falls so close to that election. We know that municipalities are the level of government that are most connected to Ontarians. It's those services, like collecting waste and recycling and making sure that our streets are cleared of snow that really matter to people. In fact, during my own election in Ottawa West–Nepean, the number one issue that I heard at the doors was potholes on local roads.

Minister, what is your message to Ontarians as we approach the next municipal election day this coming Monday?

Hon. Steve Clark: Again, I want to thank the member for Ottawa West–Nepean for encouraging young people to get involved in the process. Candidates in the municipal election across this province are working hard to get out and meet voters in advance of Monday's election. I encourage everyone in this chamber to encourage their constituents to get to know those candidates, talk to them about their platforms and, most importantly, encourage them to vote on October 22 for the candidate of their choice.

I think we're so fortunate. I want to take this opportunity to congratulate every one of those candidates that are putting their name on a ballot. I think we all have to agree that we all recognize the incredible pressures that candidates have. So I think each and every one of us not only should encourage their constituents to vote but to thank those men and women who are putting their names on the ballot this October 22nd election.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): That concludes the time we have for question period today.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Scarborough–Guildwood on a point of order.

Ms. Mitzie Hunter: Point of order, Speaker: I wanted to just extend a warm welcome to someone I respect for her work on gender-based violence. Farrah Khan is in the House today. I know today is the day of persons. I think it's very important that we recognize the work that you've done for women.

NOTICE OF DISSATISFACTION

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Pursuant to standing order 38(a), the member for Toronto Centre has given notice of her dissatisfaction with the answer to her question given by the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport concerning funding for sexual assault centres. This matter will be debated Tuesday at 6 p.m.

MEMBER'S PRIVILEGES

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I am now prepared to rule on the point of privilege that was raised yesterday.

On Wednesday, October 17, 2018, the member for Flamborough–Glanbrook, Mrs. Skelly, raised a question of privilege concerning an incident that allegedly took place on the floor of the House during the ringing of the division bells for the vote on the opposition day motion that was debated on the previous afternoon, October 16.

The member alleges that, during the ringing of the bells, the member for Hamilton Centre crossed the chamber floor to the government side and while there made deliberate and unwanted physical contact with her and made remarks that the member contended could be construed as an attempt to interfere with her right to vote. In response, the opposition House leader pointed to an earlier provocation of the member for Hamilton Centre during the debate on her motion, in the form of government members standing in the back row of the government side to block, allegedly intentionally, the camera view of her making her remarks. I've also received written submissions on this matter from the government House leader and the official opposition House leader.

After carefully reviewing the matter, I cannot find that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been established. The authorities suggest that, for a prima facie case of privilege to be made out, the circumstances giving rise to the alleged breach of privilege should have prevented the member from discharging their parliamentary duties.

Joseph Maingot, on pages 222 and 223 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, makes the following remarks about the narrow confines of parliamentary privilege: "There must be some act that improperly interferes with the member's rights.... The interference, however, must not only obstruct the member in his capacity as a member, it must obstruct or allege to obstruct the member in his parliamentary work. For just as the member is protected for what he does during a 'proceeding in Parliament,' so must the member's parliamentary work or work relating to a 'proceeding in Parliament' be alleged to be improperly interfered with before the Speaker may find a prima facie case...."

The member for Flamborough–Glanbrook cited a ruling given by Speaker Peters on May 4, 2010, which I recall. But what distinguishes that incident from this one is that, in 2010, it was established to the satisfaction of the Speaker that members of the assembly were confined at a budget lock-up in a government building and not permitted to leave in sufficient time to attend a meeting of

the House. This obstruction constituted a prima facie breach of privilege.

In the case at hand, the parliamentary proceeding in question was the vote on the October 16 opposition day motion, which, I note, the member subsequently participated in, casting her vote with the nays. There is nothing to suggest that the member was obstructed from voting or that the incident otherwise interfered with her ability to carry on her parliamentary duties.

I understand that, in some ways, this place is adversarial, to say the least. That is the very nature, though, of parliamentary debate. Members will inevitably have different opinions and approaches, and sometimes this will lead to conflict and heated exchanges. We see that from time to time. As I say, that is all fair and in the nature of this place. However, we all share the honour, having been elected to this Legislative Assembly, to represent the citizens of Ontario and our constituencies. It would be a disservice to this place, and to those citizens who elected us, for us to tolerate honourable disagreement degenerating to the level of personal insult, confrontation and closed-mindedness.

Only very recently, the House adopted a members' code of conduct on harassment, which every single member of this assembly has personally signed a written pledge to uphold. The preamble of the code cites its purpose as being, "To foster a culture in which members of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario treat each other with respect and professionalism." Hopefully, this is an attainable aspiration and it reflects the ways that all members can expect the House to conduct itself when doing the people's business in this, the people's House.

These are still relatively early days in this Parliament, and together we have the opportunity to set the tone and establish a respectful, productive culture here. It is incumbent upon all of us to fulfill our roles with the dignity befitting this institution, and to treat one another with respect and professionalism, as our constituents would expect of all of us.

This House stands in recess until 1 p.m. this afternoon.
The House recessed from 1150 to 1300.

INTRODUCTION OF VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I understand that shortly we'll be joined in the Speaker's gallery by Richard Donovan, CEO of the Return on Disability group, and Jennifer Donovan, their chief customer officer.

We will also have Stuart Howe and Lubna Aslam from Spinal Cord Injury Ontario.

We want to welcome them to Queen's Park.

M^{me} Nathalie Des Rosiers: It's a pleasure to welcome to Queen's Park John Bennett, who is a realtor from Ottawa-Vanier. He's on his way up. Welcome to Queen's Park.

Mr. Michael Parsa: I would like to welcome to the Legislature members of the Ontario Real Estate Association. Maybe they haven't arrived yet.

Mr. John Vanthof: I don't often get people from my riding, so I'd like to introduce Voula Zafiridis and Roseanne Clyburn, proud residents of Timiskaming-Cochrane.

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I would like to welcome my good friend Ettore Cardarelli and Caroline Feeley from the Ontario Real Estate Association.

Mr. Will Bouma: It would appear that our realtors have gotten lost this afternoon, but they are coming.

It amazes me that the people who are most directly connected to making people's home ownership dreams come true are our real estate agents.

I would like to welcome, from my riding, Rose Sicoli, Alex Grinton, John Oddi and Ray Petro.

Hon. Sylvia Jones: It is indeed a pleasure to welcome, from the beautiful riding of Dufferin-Caledon, Navdeep Gill and Bhupinder Cheema.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I'm very happy and honoured to introduce the following guests:

—Florence Chapman, SenseAbility;

—Mark Wafer, president of Megleen Treadstone;

—Tony Elenis, Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association;

—Larry McCloskey, Carleton University;

—Gary Malkowski, Canadian Hearing Society;

—Julia N. Dumanian, Canadian Hearing Society;

—Stuart Howe, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario;

—Lubna Aslam, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario;

—Joe Dale, Ontario Disability Employment Network;

—Sonny Brar, Retail Council of Canada;

—Louie DiPalma, Ontario Chamber of Commerce;

—Zinnia Batliwalla, March of Dimes Canada;

—Wayne Henshall, Canadian National Institute for the Blind;

—earlier, Mr. Speaker, you already called the name: Richard Donovan, CEO of the Return on Disability group, chair of the Accessibility Standards Advisory Council, and chair of the information and communications standards development committee; and

—Jennifer Donovan, chief customer officer, the Return on Disability Group.

They'll be joining us in your gallery, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Kramp: As well, on behalf of the realtors today, I have a couple of members from my riding who not here yet, but I will certainly acknowledge them now rather than later. They are Cheryl Easton from Bancroft and Valerie Miles from Bancroft. Might I add as well that Valerie is running in the municipal election. God bless all the people who have put their names forward. We'll see how everything goes for everybody.

Welcome on behalf of all the realtors. I know that they're certainly here to support Mr. Bailey, the member from Sarnia-Lambton, in his efforts on behalf of realtors today.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): I also wish to inform the House that a former member of the Legislature is with us today who represented the riding of York East in the 35th Parliament. Mr. Gary Malkowski is here today. Welcome.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

HEALTH CARE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Today I rise on behalf of my constituents of London–Fanshawe who are facing challenges accessing the health care they deserve. London–Fanshawe is a community that is particularly hit hard by this issue. On a weekly basis, I hear from constituents concerned that they cannot access primary care.

I spoke to a constituent in the riding who told me that she is fortunate to have a family doctor, but many of her family members do not and are presently patients of a nurse practitioner-led clinic. The issue is that this clinic has a high turnover, and in the last three years they have had three nurse practitioners. Currently, this clinic has hired a part-time nurse practitioner with a full-time case-load. When she asked why a part-time nurse practitioner was hired instead of a full-time one, she was told that it was a funding issue.

Speaker, we know that nurse practitioner-led clinics work for patients, and we know that when people have access to primary care, their health outcomes are better. But when we have a lack of funding, what happens? People's health conditions get worse. They are forced to go to the emergency room.

People deserve to have access to primary care when they need it. Today, I stand on behalf of my constituents and all Ontarians to demand that this government commit to adequately funding health care so that all our communities have access to reliable primary care.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK

Mr. Michael Parsa: This week is Small Business Week in Ontario. It is a chance for us to recognize and celebrate the hard work and dedication of small businesses and small business owners throughout our province.

Small businesses are the backbone of Ontario's economy. In fact, 98% of businesses with employees in Ontario are small businesses. As of December 2017, there were over 400,000 small businesses with employees in Ontario. These businesses are run by innovators and job creators who employ almost two million Ontarians.

Small businesses are the lifeblood of this province, and that is why we are tirelessly working to create an environment where small businesses can prosper and grow. As it is Small Business Week, I would like to take this opportunity to thank and recognize small businesses and small business owners and entrepreneurs all over this province. Without you, this province would not be the rich, dynamic place that it is today.

I would like to thank the Canadian Federation of Independent Business for their initiative as Small Business Saturday is coming up. I encourage everyone to please participate in this national initiative and show their appreciation for a local small business by dropping in to a small business on Saturday to see what they have to offer and maybe give them some business.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: My youngest daughter is a proud, gorgeous trans woman. She was born in 1992, and throughout her time in school the sex ed curriculum did not teach consent, respect or support for LGBTQ+ kids and their families. My daughter was bullied and actively hurt by her classmates and, frankly, her teachers and the administrators at her schools. Perhaps if the updated curriculum had been in place, that would not have been the case.

Knowing the pain that my daughter and our family faced, I fear that other young queer students are at risk of bullying, harassment or worse because this government has decided to drag us back to the last century.

Rayne Fisher-Quann is a student leader and a constituent of mine. She is brilliant, thoughtful and articulate on why students want and need a sex ed curriculum that reflects 21st-century conversations about respect and consent.

1310

A few days ago, Rayne tweeted the following: "I want to have a mediated, on-camera discussion with" the Minister of Education and the Premier "about the sex ed curriculum. I don't think either of them have actually spoken to a single person born after 1998 throughout all of this, and they need to." The CBC's Metro Morning host, Matt Galloway, said on Twitter that he'd happily moderate this discussion.

I hope the Premier and the Minister of Education will be brave enough to take Rayne up on her offer. I think it would be a salutary conversation for everyone who participates and listens.

WITNESS—CANADIAN ART
OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

Mr. Billy Pang: On Sunday, September 30, I had the opportunity to visit an exhibition, Witness—Canadian Art of the First World War, in the Varley Art Gallery of Markham. This exhibition was produced by the Canadian War Museum.

Mr. Speaker, witnesses of the First World War recorded their experiences of the conflict on scraps of paper and in pocket-sized sketchbooks. They sketched their everyday experiences: battlefields and bombed houses. The impact made me think of a song that you may know:

Where have all the soldiers gone, long time passing?

Where have all the soldiers gone, long time ago?

Where have all the soldiers gone?

Gone to graveyards, every one.

Oh, when will they ever learn?

Oh, when will they ever learn?

We have a lot of disagreement here in this House, but we disagree in a civilized way. May peace prevail on earth.

CKGN FM

M. Guy Bourgoïn: Il me fait plaisir aujourd'hui de prendre quelques minutes afin de reconnaître CKGN FM,

une radio communautaire francophone dans ma circonscription qui célèbre son 25^e anniversaire d'existence le 20 octobre.

En effet, c'est le 20 octobre 1993 que CKGN FM prit les ondes à Kapuskasing pour desservir la région, de Smooth Rock Falls à Opasatika. À ses tout premiers débuts, CKGN était écoutée par 76 % de la population et possédait 60 % du marché. Aujourd'hui, 93,2 % des francophones de la région de Kapuskasing écoutent CKGN, y consacrant une moyenne de 3,5 heures par jour. Ces chiffres démontrent très bien la place importante que prend cette radio francophone dans notre région. Quoi que intéressée au monde extérieur, 90 % des nouvelles de CKGN sont le reflet de la région.

Le conseil d'administration est appuyé dans son travail par des comités de ressources humaines, technique, programmation et de levées de fonds. Ces comités assurent la vitalité de la radio.

Je souhaite vous féliciter pour toutes ces belles années d'existence et je suis certain que votre présence dans notre communauté va continuer à battre son plein. Félicitations, CKGN.

RONALD COLACO

Mr. Rudy Cuzzetto: I recently had the great honour to speak at the Canadian Canara Vision Annual Charity Dinner at the Payal Banquet Hall in Mississauga, where Mr. Ronald Colaco was the guest of honour. I presented the Canara World Visionary Award to Mr. Colaco for his benevolent service to humanity.

When Ronald married his wife, Jean, back in 1983, they took a pledge to devote part of their income to charity. It is a pledge they have followed ever since. Over the last 35 years, Ronald has donated millions of dollars to help the less fortunate, regardless of class, race, religion or language. He has been a pioneer, donating infrastructure facilities for the benefit of the general public across India: from hospitals, to schools, to public roads, to police, to judicial buildings and to rehabilitation centres to treat addictions.

I know that all the members, on both sides of this House, agree that Ronald's hard work, dedication and his commitment to give back to society are an inspiration for us all. I would like to honour him, together with the Premier, and welcome him and Canadian Canara Vision to Queen's Park

NIAGARA REGION

Mr. Jeff Burch: It is not with pride that I rise today. This week, the highest level of local government in my riding, the Niagara region, received an award of significant dishonour. Niagara region was announced as the winner of the annual Code of Silence Award for their outstanding achievement in government secrecy.

The award was given by the Canadian Association of Journalists, News Media Canada and the Canadian Journalists for Free Expression. For those of us who have

seen first-hand the shocking level of secrecy that this regional government has participated in, the award comes as no surprise.

Niagara region has delayed and denied freedom-of-information requests and consistently showed a lack of transparency about councillor expenses. In the past year, the Niagara region has been subject to two Ombudsman investigations, the first due to the illegal seizure of a journalist's computer and notes, where, during the investigation, the region's council attempted to influence the content of the report. Regional leaders frequently refuse to speak to the press, and the conservation authority has been taken over by a cabal of developer-friendly councillors.

Speaker, I did warn, a couple of months ago, in my statement at 4:30 in the morning when protestors were being dragged out in handcuffs, that this is what happens when partisan politics and developer money infiltrate and seek to control municipal government bodies and conservation authorities.

I have been calling for accountability and transparency at the region of Niagara since my first day at Queen's Park. My predecessor, Cindy Forster, called for it for years before me. The voters of Niagara have a chance this Monday to give their opinion on their current representation, and I believe they will choose to change toward greater transparency.

HOLODOMOR

Miss Kinga Surma: This weekend, I will be attending the unveiling of the Holodomor Memorial at the Princes' Gates at Exhibition Place. This is a truly significant event in history for the Ukrainian community in the greater Toronto area, which is home to over 145,000 residents of Ukrainian descent.

For those who don't already know, Holodomor is the name given to the genocide by famine that occurred in Ukraine from 1932 to 1933. The scale of this genocide is significant. Millions of Ukrainians perished as victims of a man-made famine under Joseph Stalin's regime, with 25,000 people dying each day at the peak of the famine.

The unveiling of this memorial parkette on the 85th anniversary of the Holodomor will provide a beautiful and serene gathering place for remembering the victims of the genocide of the Ukrainian people and raise public awareness of the Holodomor as a genocide in this tragic piece of Ukrainian history.

The focal point of this memorial will be the sculpture Bitter Memories of Childhood. I hope you visit, and as you look at this sculpture, I hope you truly appreciate the value of human life and how fortunate we are to live in this great province and in this great country of ours. As a Polish immigrant myself, my family and I always give thanks for the democratic values we share.

WHITBY TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

Mr. Lorne Coe: I'm pleased to highlight the efforts of the town of Whitby to support its emerging technology

sector. Speaker, in the historic centre of the town, there is a developing innovation ecosystem of over a dozen companies, together employing in excess of 500 people.

Recognizing the significance of this emerging tech sector, the town recently purchased from the province the 9,000-square-foot former land registry office, which is currently being renovated to house a business, WiHub accelerator. The purpose of the accelerator is to fill a gap, helping tech companies to scale up operations, create well-paying and value-added jobs, and establish roots in Whitby. This focus, Speaker, represents the very type of long-term investment needed to build Ontario's economy, one which our government strongly supports.

I congratulate Mayor Don Mitchell and the council for their foresight, and 360insights, a private corporation recognized within the top 25 fastest-growing in Canada, for its support and vision.

1320

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: I am honoured and privileged to rise in the Legislature today to acknowledge October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Mr. Speaker, almost two million people in Ontario have a disability, and as our population ages, that number is only going to increase. In the last five years, it is also worth noting that about half a million Canadians with a disability have graduated with a post-secondary education, but they have found it very difficult to get a job. In fact, the unemployment rate for people with a disability is 16%—more than double Ontario's unemployment rate—and two thirds of the people with a disability believe their disability is a factor in their unemployment. At the same time, almost 30% of small and medium-sized businesses struggle to fill job vacancies.

The math does not add up. A disability does not necessarily make someone unable to work. In fact, research shows that people with disabilities are great employees and often rank higher than their colleagues in many workplace evaluation categories. The bottom line is that every Ontarian should be able to work if they are capable and want to.

We often talk about how hiring someone with a disability is the right thing to do, but what we do not talk about is why it's the right business decision. Over the years, there have been many outstanding leaders like Mark Wafer who have, through their tireless efforts—

Applause.

Hon. Raymond Sung Joon Cho: Thank you, Mr. Wafer—demonstrated business success when hiring those with disabilities.

People with disabilities are being hired across all sectors and they are bringing their exceptional talents and skills to their workplaces.

The facts bear this out, Mr. Speaker. Contrary to what many people believe, more and more employers are hiring people with a variety of disabilities, and those employees are staying with the company longer, they are more productive, and they have a higher workplace safety record. As a result, the stigma and those misconceptions are fading fast.

Banks are having success hiring people with autism in their fraud departments, noticing that people with autism can often spot patterns and problems with data that may otherwise go unnoticed.

There are so many examples that illustrate Ontario's leadership. Look no further than the Ontario Disability Employment Network, a group led by Joe Dale—they are united to increase employment opportunities for people who have a disability—or the team at Magnet, a not-for-profit co-founded by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and Ryerson University, which connects businesses and communities with new opportunities. For me, Magnet stands out because of its commitment to addressing the underemployment of people with disabilities and others who face barriers to employment.

I have personally seen this leadership in action as well. Mr. Speaker, in August I had the pleasure to visit Carleton University and take part in an exceptional tour organized by Larry McCloskey and his team at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities. I came away impressed with Carleton's expertise and commitment to create greater accessibility and a more inclusive world.

Among its many initiatives, I was introduced to the attendant and personal care services program for students in residence with disabilities. The program, which runs 24 hours a day, is the only one of its kind in Canada and gives students with disabilities who face barriers the opportunity to complete post-secondary education.

That's why National Disability Employment Awareness Month is so important, because it gives us the opportunity to have important conversations to talk about disability and employment the way we need to. It gives us momentum to create an even more supportive employment culture in Ontario. I hope we all take advantage of October as National Disability Employment Awareness Month to think about how we can help break down the barriers, the stigma and the misconceptions about the people with disabilities.

In summary, our government is working hard to increase employment for all Ontarians, and that definitely includes people with disabilities, who want to work, because the success of one will trigger the success of many.

Mr. Speaker, we are advancing together, changing attitudes and achieving real change. Together, with leadership from every member in this House, we can one day live in a province where an awareness month will not even need to be celebrated.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Hon. John Yakabuski: Speaker, every day when Ontarians exit their driveways and steer onto the road, they

re-enter a pre-made deal with other drivers: “I’ll obey the rules if you do too.” These rules—using your signals, stopping at red lights, following the speed limit—only keep our roads safe if we all obey them.

Yesterday, cannabis became legalized across Canada. With the legalization of cannabis, Ontarians must all revisit the road safety rule book and shake hands on the new safety standards with other drivers once again.

When our government took office in June, we implemented a zero-tolerance approach for the presence of drugs or alcohol while driving. Zero means zero for all young, novice and commercial drivers. That’s for alcohol, that’s for cannabis and other drugs that affect your ability to drive, including prescription drugs.

In 2019, we will introduce monetary penalties that would apply to all provincial drug- and alcohol-related driving sanctions.

1330

Public education is a key component to keeping our roads safe. Our partners, like MADD—Mothers Against Drunk Driving—and Arrive Alive Drive Sober, as well as the CAA, have worked tirelessly to educate the public about the dangers of driving impaired. As a result, for years, drinking and driving has been trending downward.

Our ministry, as part of a wider provincial government initiative, has launched a campaign on social media, online and on television to clear up this common confusion. We want every person in Ontario to know the effects of cannabis and learn the rules and standards. Our message is clear: It is never okay to drive impaired. And impaired is impaired, regardless of whether it’s by alcohol or drugs.

There was a study recently released by the CAA the first week of October that told us Ontarians are concerned. The people of Ontario overwhelmingly believe that legalization will lead to an increase in the number of cannabis-impaired drivers on the road and, as a result, there will be more cannabis-related collisions. I share their concern. One of the few jurisdictions we can look to for comparison is Colorado. Since Colorado legalized cannabis in 2012, their cannabis-related traffic deaths have more than doubled. Ontarians can find comfort in knowing that we have strict impaired driving laws and penalties in place to charge offenders.

This CAA study reveals that the majority of cannabis users don’t believe that cannabis affects their ability to drive. This is one of the greatest misconceptions that threatens road safety.

I am sure that I am not the first to tell this to Ontarians, but here goes: Driving high is dangerous. It is not only illegal; it is dangerous. Cannabis products that have THC cause impairment in motor skills, including reaction time, cognition and decision-making abilities. There can be no doubt that each of these qualities is needed to operate a motor vehicle safely. Cannabis can affect your coordination, it can slow down your reaction time, it can decrease awareness of distance and timing, and it can alter your depth perception.

It took 50 years after the first reported case of drinking and driving for Parliament to create an offence for driving

over 0.08. Since then, our laws have evolved to include standards for impairment. Now that cannabis is legal, not only do we have laws and penalties in place, we have already started educating the public. Our roads in Ontario are consistently ranked either first or second for road safety in North America. This is something that I’m not willing to give up, and I’m sure Ontarians aren’t either.

If I can leave with one message, which is being repetitive: Everybody shares a responsibility—people in the government, but every driver out there, every citizen, we all share a responsibility to keep our roads safe. Remember this: Impaired is impaired, regardless of whether it’s alcohol or drugs. I ask everyone in Ontario, don’t drive impaired.

VISITOR

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Before I ask for opposition responses, I wish to acknowledge the presence in the House of a former member of provincial Parliament, who served in the 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Parliaments. Tim Hudak is with us here again. Welcome, Tim.

Responses?

NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH

Mr. Joel Harden: It’s an honour to rise today in honour of what Minister Cho has said. I just want the minister to know that I appreciated the words he said. I fully agree we need to struggle for a more inclusive province when it comes to people with disabilities and their employment needs. I fully agree.

What I wanted to say in my response is to highlight a few things from my riding of Ottawa Centre, Minister, and I know I promised you individually that I would put some of these pioneers on your table.

Causeway is an organization in Ottawa Centre that has been working with a council of 100 different employers to help people with disabilities find meaningful employment. They struggle, cap in hand, to find various sorts of funding to make sure they can do that, for the very reasons you mentioned, Minister: to make sure that people with disabilities can avail themselves of employment and employers can know what a great business decision it is to make sure those workers have a decent job.

I also want to talk about the case of Ben Williamson. Ben Williamson is a student at Carleton University—the very campus you visited, Minister, with the Paul Menton Centre, which I agree is award-winning. Ben had to fundraise his way into his second year of undergraduate studies, unfortunately, because of how high tuition fees have gotten, given successive Conservative and Liberal governments. At this point, I find it extraordinary that a student of Ben’s calibre has to work with somebody from the Office of Student Affairs and with a GoFundMe campaign to raise money to go into his second year of undergraduate studies at Carleton. Ben did it. He is an

extraordinary person. But for every Ben, there are thousands of other competent students in this province who need support for their post-secondary needs, Minister. I look forward to working with you on that front so you don't have to launch an intrepid GoFundMe campaign.

I also want to say this. I know that the minister is a social worker and I know the minister has talked to me about needing to be a human rights advocate in this job, and I completely agree with that. But I also just want my friends in government to know that words are important, and a signal of intent is important. I've been sitting in this job now for a number of months, and I like the words and I like the intent, but I also judge action as being important. So let me talk a little bit about the labour market my friends are encouraging lately.

What did we find out? We found out recently that, effective January, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums for employers are going to be cut by 30%—30%. If you think of some of the large employers in this province, Speaker, like Walmart or Loblaws or Canadian Tire, I ask through you to the minister: Did those employers need a 30% cut in their Workplace Safety and Insurance Board premiums, or did people with disabilities and their advocate organizations need that money to make sure that people with disabilities could find employment? I think it's a telling choice.

I also want to ask, because I know there are a number of lobbyists in the House today from our friends who are realtors, and there is a private member's bill considering allowing the incorporation of realtors: Are we in a position in this labour market where it's appropriate for high-salaried individuals to make income tax payments of 10.5%—just so you can appreciate that, 10.5%, because that will be the new corporate tax rate once this government has implemented its ambitions—while people with disabilities are struggling to make ends meet?

Speaker, I have to say something to you. When I knocked on doors in this election campaign and I spoke to people who have disabilities, they are living in poverty. We shouldn't be shovelling out benefits to people who have too much.

IMPAIRED DRIVING

Ms. Jennifer K. French: I'm glad to have a couple of moments to speak in response to the Minister of Transportation on impaired driving. This is a topic of conversation that is being had across the province. We are finding ourselves at the threshold of new challenges on our roadways. People are concerned, of course, on any given day about safety, but here, as we are facing down new rules and new concerns when it comes to cannabis and the potential for more ways for folks to be impaired on the roadways, everyone in our communities is very concerned.

One of my personal friends was in a car accident. I know that the officers used their discretion. They found this individual impaired, but there is no roadside test for what we suspected could have been some kind of drug. Who knows? There was no roadside test. And here we are

at the threshold of significant change without the tools in the hands of our officers. We know that they have professional discretion and we encourage them to use it, but that doesn't protect them and that doesn't protect drivers. We need tools and resources to come out along with legislation and these massive changes.

To hear the minister talk about "impaired is impaired is impaired," yes, but protection is protection is protection, and what is that going to look like? That is the question that Ontarians have for this minister and this government. Thank you.

1340

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): The member for Aurora–Oak Ridges–Richmond Hill on a point of order.

Mr. Michael Parsa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Earlier on, I welcomed my friends to the Legislature, members from the Ontario Real Estate Association. They weren't here, so if you don't mind, I'd like to re-acknowledge them and thank them for being here this afternoon.

The Speaker (Hon. Ted Arnott): Point of order from the member from Timmins.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I just wanted to welcome Michel Blais. All the way from Timmins, he's here to watch this debate this afternoon, along with a whole bunch of other people from the real estate business across this province. We want to welcome you.

PETITIONS

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Jill Andrew: Good afternoon. I stand in support of my residents in Toronto–St. Paul's who are in support of the Fight for \$15 and Fairness. This petition is to the Ontario Legislative Assembly.

"Don't Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

"Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

"Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

"Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

"Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

"Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario's consumer price index;

"Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Protect workers’ employment status, pay and benefits when contracts are flipped or businesses are sold in the building services sector;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers; and

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I proudly affix my signature and hand this over to my page, Armita.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

Ms. Christine Hogarth: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas certain commercial operations known as ‘puppy/kitten mills’ have been reported to keep animals in precarious conditions in breach of provincial animal welfare laws; and

“Whereas dog/cat breeding in accordance with the law is a legitimate economic activity; and

“Whereas it is the duty of any government to ensure the laws of Canada and Ontario are respected and that the health and well-being of innocent animals is protected;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services work proactively with all amateur and professional dog/cat breeders, as well as consumers, with the intent to tackle confirmed animal cruelty cases in puppy/kitten mills and to educate all stakeholders about animal welfare standards.”

I’m happy to sign this petition and hand it to Ethan.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Mr. Faisal Hassan: I have a petition entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I add my support to this petition, affix my name and give it to page Jiire.

INJURED WORKERS

Mr. Joel Harden: I have a petition entitled, “Workers’ Comp is a Right.”

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not ... have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

It’s a pleasure to present and support this petition. I’m going to be signing it and handing it to page Amani for the Clerks’ table.

EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I rise in the House today to table a petition on behalf of my constituents of Parkdale–High Park. It’s entitled, “Don’t Take Away Our \$15 Minimum Wage and Fairer Labour Laws.”

“Whereas the vast majority of Ontarians support a \$15 minimum wage and better laws to protect workers; and

“Whereas last year, in response to overwhelming popular demand by the people of Ontario, the provincial government brought in legislation and regulations that:

“Deliver 10 personal emergency leave days for all workers, the first two of which are paid;

“Make it illegal to pay part-time, temporary, casual or contract workers less than their full-time or directly hired co-workers, including equal public holiday pay and vacation pay;

“Raised the adult general minimum wage to \$14 per hour and further raises it to a \$15 minimum wage on January 1, 2019, with annual adjustments by Ontario’s consumer price index;

“Make it easier to join unions, especially for workers in the temporary help, home care, community services and building services sectors;

“Make client companies responsible for workplace health and safety for temporary agency employees;

“Provide strong enforcement through the hiring of an additional 175 employment standards officers;

“Will ensure workers have modest improvements in the scheduling of their hours, including:

“—three hours’ pay when workers are expected to be on call all day, but are not called into work;

“—three hours’ pay for any employee whose shift is cancelled with less than two days’ notice; and

“—the right to refuse shifts without penalty if the shift is scheduled with fewer than four days’ notice;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to honour these commitments, including the \$15 minimum wage and fairer scheduling rules set to take effect on January 1, 2019. We further call on the assembly to take all necessary steps to enforce these laws and extend them to ensure no worker is left without protection.”

I fully support this petition and will be adding my signature to it as well.

1350

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: I would like to table another petition on behalf of my constituents of Parkdale–High Park. This is called “Stop Doug Ford from Cutting Mental Health Care.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Doug Ford has announced a \$335-million per year funding cut to mental health care and services;

“Whereas an estimated 12,000 children are waiting up to 18 months for mental health care, and there are 63% more children in the ER for mental health issues than there were in 2006;

“Whereas a cut to already threadbare mental health funding will mean longer waits for care and fewer services—which can result in mental health conditions being exacerbated, and more people living with mental illness spiralling into crisis;

“Whereas front-line care workers and first responders are doing the best they can, but coping with a shortage of resources;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to reverse” Premier “Ford’s \$330-million per year funding cut to Ontario’s mental health services.”

I fully support this petition and will be adding my signature to it as well.

CELIAC DISEASE

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: “To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the IgA TTG blood screening is the internationally recognized standard as the first step in diagnosing a person with celiac disease;

“Whereas celiac disease is an autoimmune disease that can strike people with a genetic predisposition at any time of life and presents with a large variety of non-specific signs and symptoms;

“Whereas many individuals, such as family members of diagnosed celiacs, are at higher risk and pre-symptomatic screening is advised;

“Whereas covering the cost of the simple test would dramatically reduce wait times to diagnosis, save millions to the health care system due to misdiagnoses, unnecessary testing and serious complications from untreated celiac disease and reduce the painful suffering and health decline of thousands of individuals;

“Whereas Ontario is the only province in Canada not to cover this blood test;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario government to cover the cost of the diagnostic blood test (IgA TTG) for celiac disease for those who show symptoms, are a first-degree relative or have an associated condition.”

I fully support this petition, sign it and give it to page Eiliyah to deliver to the table.

INJURED WORKERS

Ms. Bhutla Karpoche: This petition is entitled “Workers’ Comp is a Right.”

“Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas about 200,000 to 300,000 people in Ontario are injured on the job every year;

“Whereas over a century ago, workers in Ontario who were injured on the job gave up the right to sue their employers, in exchange for a system that would provide them with just compensation;

“Whereas decades of cost-cutting have pushed injured workers into poverty and onto publicly funded social assistance programs, and have gradually curtailed the rights of injured workers;

“Whereas injured workers have the right to quality and timely medical care, compensation for lost wages, and protection from discrimination;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to change the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to accomplish the following for injured workers in Ontario:

“Eliminate the practice of ‘deeming’ or ‘determining,’ which bases compensation on phantom jobs that injured workers do not actually have;

“Ensure that the WSIB prioritizes and respects the medical opinions of the health care providers who treat the injured worker directly;

“Prevent compensation from being reduced or denied based on ‘pre-existing conditions’ that never affected the worker’s ability to function prior to the work injury.”

I fully support this petition and will be adding my signature to it as well.

CURRICULUM

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: I have a petition called “Protecting Children: Forward, Not Backward, on Sex Ed.”

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the health and physical education curriculum empowers young people to make informed decisions about relationships and their bodies;

“Whereas gender-based violence, gender inequality, unintended pregnancies, ‘sexting,’ and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) pose serious risks to the safety and well-being of young people;

“Whereas one in three women and one in six men experience sexual violence in Canada, and a lack of age-appropriate education about sexual health and healthy relationships leaves children and youth vulnerable to exploitation;

“Whereas one in five parents reported their own child being a victim of cyberbullying; and

“Whereas Doug Ford and the Conservative government is dragging Ontario backward, requiring students to learn an outdated sex ed curriculum that excludes information about consent, sexual orientation, gender identity, sexting, cyberbullying and safe and healthy relationships;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to direct the Ministry of Education to continue the use of the 2015 health and physical education curriculum in schools and move Ontario forward, not backward.”

I fully support this petition and give it to page Sophie to deliver to the table.

PRIVATE MEMBERS’ PUBLIC BUSINESS

TAX FAIRNESS FOR REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L’ÉQUITÉ FISCALE POUR LES PROFESSIONNELS DE L’IMMOBILIER

Mr. Bailey moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 38, An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 with respect to personal real estate corporations / Projet de loi 38, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés par actions et la Loi de 2002 sur le courtage commercial et immobilier relativement aux sociétés personnelles immobilières.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good to see you in the chair.

I’m extremely pleased to rise today to debate Bill 38, Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals Act. This is the first time that I’ve introduced and debated this bill. However, it is not the first time that the bill, or a version of it, has been introduced in this Legislature. On at least three previous occasions, it was introduced by my colleague the member from Bay of Quinte, now the government House leader and Minister of Government and Consumer Services—my boss. In fact, on the last occasion this bill was introduced in this Legislature, it was also co-sponsored by the member from Kitchener-Waterloo and the former member from Eglinton–Lawrence. It had all-party support at that time.

I’m optimistic that after our debate this afternoon, this bill will still have unanimous support from all members on all sides of the House, and that it will move quickly through the legislative process.

We’re joined by a number of guests in the Legislature here today, representing the real estate professionals of Ontario. I’d like to welcome them at this time. I’d also like to recognize their leader, Mr. Tim Hudak, the former member from Niagara West–Glanbrook. He’s now the CEO of the Ontario Real Estate Association. Welcome, Mr. Hudak.

And a personal shout-out—I don’t know all the names, but I have a couple of people from my riding of Sarnia–Lambton: Mr. John McCharles and Donna Mathewson. They are from Sarnia–Lambton, so a special shout-out to them, and to all the members. I’d also—okay, I’ve got that in there. I thought I was ad-libbing that, but it was in here. I always enjoy my meetings with the Sarnia-Lambton Real Estate Board. They were one of the first groups that I met with 11 years ago, after I was first elected, and I continue to meet with them. I always look forward to hearing about the issues that they are tackling, along with OREA, the Ontario Real Estate Association.

I remember speaking with them about this issue a long time ago, about personal real estate corporations over the last few years. At the time, I thought that the bill made perfect sense. I still do. I was sure that this was something we would get done in the past. However, we didn't. But we're here today and we're starting down this road again. Unfortunately, the bill didn't move forward under the previous government. I hope now that we've had a change of government and a change of members, etc., that we will be able to move the bill forward.

I'm sure every one of the members of this Legislature either has a family member or a friend who is a real estate professional. Certainly, everyone who has ever sold or purchased a home can talk about their experiences and their extended family member. I see the member from Renfrew. I know he had a former life in real estate. His wife, I think, is maybe still in that profession. Anyway, there is probably a number in the Legislature in that same position.

1400

Many people will tell you that buying a home is one of the most stressful things in modern life. Through it all, our real estate professionals are there at our sides to offer advice, counsel us, and finally get the deal done.

Real estate professionals really do become ambassadors for the communities they live in. When the member for Quinte tabled his bill during the previous legislative session, he talked about how real estate professionals are so giving of their time in their communities. After all, real estate professionals live in the communities in which they work and, in order to be successful, they need to be active, engaged members of their communities. I know that many of them are. They are doing everything from coaching and sponsoring youth sports teams to serving on local community boards to fundraising for local charities. Many of them are involved in municipal politics as well.

Real estate professionals really do come to embody the positive spirit of the communities that they live in, Madam Speaker. I've certainly come to notice that with the professionals in my community, and I'm sure that this is true for all the members of this Legislature as well.

I think it's time that we finally adopt this bill as a way to acknowledge all the hard work that the real estate professionals do on our behalf in our communities.

First, a brief explanation of this bill. Bill 38, the Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals Act, 2018, if passed, will amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002. Bill 38 would permit a personal real estate corporation, or PREC for short, to be registered as a broker or salesperson. Bill 38 will require that a personal real estate corporation incorporate as a professional corporation under the Business Corporations Act and that those incorporated parties trade only in real estate.

Finally, Bill 38 would amend the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act to permit a brokerage to pay commission or other remuneration to a personal real estate corporation that it employs as a broker or salesperson.

Madam Speaker, those are the details of the bill that I have tabled before this Legislature. It's a very straightforward piece of legislation. It's something that I think all of us here in this Legislature, after considering, will wonder why these changes haven't already been legislated in the past.

Personal real estate corporations allow real estate licensees to access the business advantages of incorporation, including better income planning and tax planning, smoothing out those income sweeps—the same advantages that are afforded to accountants, mortgage brokers, lawyers, veterinarians, doctors, architects and seemingly most other professions in our province.

In 2008, Madam Speaker, British Columbia became the first Canadian province to allow for the incorporation of real estate agents. Since then, Quebec, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and Nova Scotia have all moved to allow for the incorporation of these real estate agents. In six other provinces, real estate agents are able to personally incorporate. There exists no viable reason that I'm aware of why it has taken this long for Ontario to catch up.

As I've mentioned before, this is the fourth time that the bill has been introduced since 2014. There may have been some concern about the cost previously, but recent studies have shown that it's entirely likely that this change would be revenue-neutral and could actually potentially have a positive impact of up to \$9 million annually to the province's GDP. Let me say that another way: Personal real estate corporations would more than pay for themselves in terms of the initial tax revenue lost.

The ripple effects of allowing real estate professionals to incorporate their real estate practices in Ontario are positive in terms of the GDP, employment, and government revenue. Improved cash flow from allowing incorporation of real estate professionals can now be used to increase spending on third-party services for their clients, making their businesses more competitive. More and more, marketing a home and getting the very best possible offer for a client requires the effort and creativity of a multidisciplinary team. The days of hanging a sign out front and hoping for the best are long gone.

In developing a plan to sell a home, real estate professionals often work with advertising agencies, marketing professionals, photographers, videographers, web developers and staging companies to deliver top offers and prices for their clients. Investing in these services not only means sales; it means job creation all around. Personal real estate corporations will allow those real estate professionals to leverage their profits by reinvesting in their businesses and their teams, hiring staff, buying new equipment and offering more services to clients.

Long-run economic impact studies of personal real estate corporations have estimated the potential creation of between 40 and 90 jobs annually across the province. Those are very modest numbers, but every one of those jobs matters to that person that gets that job, especially in our smaller rural communities. In my riding of Sarnia–Lambton, where there has been very positive growth in our real estate market for the last few years, that is a very

positive outcome. It allows for one more area of employment diversity in these communities.

It's also important to note the number of professions that we already allow to personally incorporate: lawyers, health care professionals, accountants, mortgage brokers and financial advisers. Some of the members of this Legislature may have themselves been incorporated during their former careers before they came here and became elected to the Legislature. Drawing the line where we currently have it doesn't only seem unfair, it also seems a little bit random.

As I mentioned earlier, there's a large contingent of real estate professionals joining us here today to hear the arguments in favour of Bill 38. They really want to see this bill passed, and I understand why. They want this bill to finally get back on the floor of the Legislature and make it to committee and become law. Hopefully, that day is today.

As I mentioned earlier, our real estate agents in each and every one of our communities—they are at all of the community events that I go to in my community. You can't go to an event where there's not a real estate agent there either organizing the event, attending the event or selling tickets to people on their contact list to make sure that there are great crowds and that the events are successful.

Real estate agents really do care about their community. Here are a couple of stats for you: 67% of all agents and brokers make donations to charity every year—that's a very large number—and 45% volunteer in a community group or organization every year. This means that they're giving of their time. Almost half of them are giving a lot of their time to volunteer on these committees. Those numbers are very good, as well.

The rate of volunteers and donations for those agents under the age of 35 actually well exceeds the millennial numbers of others across the country. In these small communities that I was talking about earlier, those numbers go anywhere from 67% to 45%. Quite often, we hear that our young people aren't as engaged as they could be and that they're not volunteering their time. They are worried about losing our volunteers. But those numbers are very staggering from the real estate sector. I think it just goes to show the commitment that our local real estate community and agents have to our local communities.

Another example of this, at the provincial level, is an organization called Realtors Care Foundation. Since its inception, the foundation has granted more than \$15 million on behalf of Ontario realtors to shelter-based organizations across this province.

I'm running out of time. I wish that I had more, or I would have included this earlier.

The foundation is funded primarily through donations directly from members' dues. Members' boards donated a dollar per member per month, from 2012 to 2015. Realtors across Canada, as well as in Ontario, have raised over \$91 million for the Realtors Care Foundation. That's really phenomenal. The reason I bring this up is because I want to handle the question of where the money is going. It's a

question we're often seized with in this House: Will the money come back to the local community? I think we can see from these numbers that it will.

I hope that we'll have good news for the realtors who are with us today and who are watching on TV at home. Keep those cards and letters coming, folks—that's from my past.

I look forward to the comments from the member for Thornhill and all the members who will be speaking from the various parties to this bill here this afternoon. I hope we can come together and make sure that we get some real fairness for the realtors of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I'm so glad to be able to stand here, on behalf of Andrea Horwath and New Democrats, to say that we will also be supporting this legislation.

Applause.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Thank you.

As you know, we co-sponsored a similar bill in a previous Legislature. It's something that has been around for how long now? How many years have we been talking about doing this? It's one of those things that just doesn't seem to get done.

Part of the problem with this place, Madam Speaker, I find, is that there are all kinds of good ideas, well-intentioned initiatives such as this one, and they come before the House as private members' bills, but we lack the authority, as individual members, to be able to get our bills heard in committee and to get the bill passed in government when it comes to third reading, because, as per our standing orders—and I understand why—it is the government that calls what's on the order paper. They decide what lives in committee and what dies, and they decide what lives and dies if it ever gets a third reading.

1410

So many of us, including the member across the way, have come to this House with some really good initiatives, got it passed at second reading and, unfortunately, the bill never got anywhere. We've also been fortunate on the other side, because I know, for example, with your "call before you dig" bill and a few others, the member across the way, along with members on this side of the House, have had some of their private members' bills passed.

I would just give this caution—and this is really the frustrating part, Madam Speaker. If the House is in agreement, then why can't we agree to make it law? It seems to me that, at one point, the government should just give up a little bit of power and think about how we could make private members' work better. We have to be responsible in our decision-making here in the House and we just can't, willy-nilly, support or oppose something based on nothing. But certainly if the House can agree—and I will bet that this bill will probably pass unanimously without a vote, because I don't think there's anybody in this House who's opposed. So why can't we have a mechanism to allow the bill to go forward and eventually become law?

We need to have a discussion amongst the House leaders and eventually in this House, and I would argue that probably the best place to do this would be at the Legislative Assembly committee, to look at how you modernize the rules in order to allow individual members to deal with initiatives like this in an effective way.

We have people from across Ontario here today. We even have somebody from Timmins, Madam Speaker. How often do we have people from Timmins come down to the debate? Michel Blais is here. I got phone calls, emails and texts from various realtors in my riding, urging me to vote for this bill. They knew I had supported it the last time and wanted to flag that our good friend Michel was here. But they've come all this way because they want to show their support for the bill. They are hoping that their being here and showing support is going to add weight towards getting it passed.

The first thing I say to all my realtor friends is, don't worry. We're all going to vote for this bill. Nobody's going to vote against it. It's something that we all agree on. But the real test is going to be if we can get this bill called in committee, and if there are amendments and we get through clause-by-clause, can we get this bill brought back at third reading? I hope that indeed will be the case.

I will just end on this point, just to say a few words in français.

C'est quelque chose qui est devant notre Assemblée depuis longtemps quand ça vient à être capable de passer ce projet de loi. Je pense que c'est à peu près le temps que l'Assemblée dise : « Écoute, si on est tous d'accord sur le projet de loi, pourquoi pas? » Ceux dans l'industrie, ça fait des années qu'ils viennent nous voir pour nous demander de passer cette initiative. Certainement, si tous les députés sont en faveur, pourquoi pas? C'est un projet de loi qui est accepté par tous les membres de l'Assemblée.

Je regarde à ce vote et j'espère que le gouvernement, à la fin de la journée, va allouer au projet de loi d'aller en avant à la troisième lecture.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: I'd just like to say that it's interesting, when you're here enough years, that you hear the same bills come back a second time. I'm sure it's a little depressing for some of the stakeholders. We have many people who are anxious to see this get through quickly, but the reality of government is that sometimes there are things that slow us down. Governments get prorogued, and nobody understands what proroguing means better than somebody who's waiting for some piece of legislation to get passed and it doesn't get passed because the government at the time prorogues and the whole process has to start right from the beginning. Until it happens to you or you're directly involved, you really don't understand how gut-wrenching that can be.

We've heard already that three previous times, this bill that we're debating today, which is Bill 38, An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 with respect to personal real estate corporations—it should be fairly simple and

straightforward, that we should allow real estate agents and mortgage brokers to also be included with lawyers and doctors and others to have personal corporations. So three previous times this was brought forward to us and received unanimous consent. One of the times was by our former leader of the Progressive Conservative caucus, MPP Tim Hudak. He's here as CEO representing the Ontario Real Estate Association. We've heard that real estate agents—we all know; we go to the local hockey rink in our areas. We know how involved they are in the community.

I want to mention somebody who passed away in my community, Maxine Povering, a real estate agent who helped a dear friend of mine buy a house in Thornhill. Unfortunately, she passed away from pancreatic cancer just over a year ago. She was somebody I used to see at Vaughan city hall advocating for the community. She was worried about roads, traffic, transit, zoning and rezoning; you name it. Nobody understands sometimes what impact zoning changes can have better than real estate agents.

We want to see this passed—we're hearing that it has support from pretty much all members in the House—to allow real estate agents the ability to better plan their lives. They could have a very good year, followed by a poor year. This would allow them to do better income tax planning. I'm sure the accountants, who are able to incorporate, would advise many of the real estate agents who are here, who are watching, who may just find out about this from their own association—they're going to be advised to in fact incorporate by their accountants, and the lawyers, I'm sure, who are also incorporated, will appreciate the extra business because they're the ones you have to go to.

I would remind people that when you do incorporate, you have to have another tax return. There's work involved in it, so unless it's going to be advisable for a tax planning purpose, a business planning purpose or to improve your cash flow, some real estate agents might be better off not incorporating; it might not be in their own best interests. They're going to have to discuss that and get advice. Because I know that many real estate associations and groups meet very often to network and to share important information, I'm sure that Tim Hudak maybe is going to be planning some of those sessions to advise his members and his association on whether or not they should incorporate.

We know that this is a digital age. This is an electronic age. I was just doing some work as, unfortunately, the executor for my late father. I'm selling his condo in Florida, and that's going on right now. We're doing it electrically. Me and my two sisters were able to sign electronically. They even gave us a choice of what type of handwriting we want our signature to be in. It's quite incredible. We're all able to do e-transactions now. It's really incredible how much we can do and how much we're going to be doing in the future that we might not even be able to imagine now. I think that the real estate association and members want that ability to, on a dime, when new technology comes out, quickly react and advise their members and do things in a seamless way.

We know that people now are able to do virtual tours of houses that they may want to go see. We've all seen all the incredible things that can be done to advance and help people get the best price for what they're selling but also to help the buyers—let's not forget the buyers—to save them some time in a very busy world where people used to have to go physically and look at multiple properties before they found one that they were even interested in thinking about buying.

We also know that selling real estate and buying real estate is such an emotional transaction—probably the most emotional that people have in their lives. Anything that we can do to help the professionals in the industry make that more streamlined as well and offer the emotional support—perhaps being incorporated might aid them as well to plan for how they can best offer that strong support, the best advice to their clients. It's never going to be easy to buy or sell a house, but we want it to be safe and we want to protect the consumers and we want to also help all our friends and neighbours in the real estate industry to be able to plan for their future and save for their retirement and invest through corporations as well.

I want to thank everybody who came down today. I want to thank the member from Sarnia–Lambton for bringing this forward. I want to thank, in advance, all my colleagues here in the Legislature for their support for this important piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Teresa J. Armstrong: Before I start talking about the bill, I first want to acknowledge the visitors who are here. I know there are many of you that I've met over the years to talk about this particular bill and the fact that you do want to have this status so that you can bring some fairness to the real estate industry. I want to welcome everyone from OREA as well as the members I've met in the past. I hope that this bill has a good outcome for you. As the member from Timmins talked about, this is about the government who sets the agenda of the bill.

1420

The member from Sarnia–Lambton: I also want to congratulate him on bringing the bill forward and presenting it, so in that way we have all-party support on this issue. So we know that.

But what we need to talk about as well is real estate agents in our own communities—I think the member from Sarnia–Lambton touched on that—and the good work they do in our communities in order to make sure that they help communities thrive and also promote their neighbourhoods so that people want to live in the neighbourhoods and homes that they sell.

I have a really good example: One of the members I've met from the real estate group that's here today is a London member. He approached me at my office—he came with some other colleagues—and we talked about a very serious issue that's happening throughout the province and throughout the country, and it's about mental health. He shared a very important and intimate story about a situation that he had experienced with regard to

mental health and his family. From there, I became involved with the organization in order to—every year, we have an event called Lifting the Silence, and it's acknowledged on World Suicide Prevention Day.

So there are those connections. Our job leads us to so many more opportunities than we can ever imagine, when we connect with all kinds of groups and agencies when they're here to talk about, in particular, this bill today, Bill 38. I want to thank all of the real estate brokers and agents who are here today and everyone in the industry who do more and go above and beyond their calling to find people their first homes, second homes, investment properties etc., but also to do that and to make our communities better, because without you, initiatives like Lifting the Silence wouldn't be happening. So thank you for that, and I'm very proud that I'm able to enjoy the opportunity to continue to meet with real estate agents in my community to further hear about some other initiatives that you might have to improve the quality of life throughout Ontario.

It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and, of course, to support Bill 38, the Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals Act. It has been about a decade that the Ontario Real Estate Association had asked the Ontario government to reform the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act. It has been 10 years, and sometimes I think there is a process that has to be followed. I know the wheels of government turn very slowly, but if you keep persisting, though—and I think it's very important that that's said: Things don't happen overnight and, depending on the will of governments and the pressure of the lobby group that comes forward, things can change and things have changed. I've seen them happen in this Legislature when there's a will to do so, and it's a good feeling. It's a good feeling when all three parties or all three representatives in this Legislature come together and do something positive for the community. I think this is a positive thing that's going to happen for the community. Real estate agents are asking for it. There are other professions as well, as we'll talk about, that already have that status.

The bill has already been tabled—I think it has been four times—and the NDP has been a champion on this reform since the beginning. We feel that this is something that's the right thing to do. In fact, my friend from Waterloo, Catherine Fife, was a co-sponsor and helped to bring the bill and the legislation to pass in second reading the last time with all-party support.

But here we are again. Some of these things come back. It's like Groundhog Day. We understand that these issues don't go away, so persistence is a huge part of making sure we push government to do what they need to do when it comes to groups like OREA.

The realtors of this province serve a very important role and purpose to Ontarians. Purchasing a home, Speaker, for the first time, let's say—we're going to start there—people call it stressful, but it's a really good stress, right? Because do you know what it means? You're going into a new phase of your life. You're going to a different stage. You may have saved enough money for a down payment.

You've worked hard. You may have lived at your parents' home for a long time to do that. You may have been able to get a good job and able to budget yourself.

But the bottom line is now you're in a position to buy a new home. So what do you do? It's a really big, daunting purchase, and not everybody knows the ins and outs of how to purchase a home, or where to even start, so we look to the expertise of real estate agents. They're trained. They're very educated and highly trained individuals, and they know how to assist and navigate the real estate market so that people can actually purchase what they're looking for.

The needs of purchasers and buyers have changed over the years—tremendously. I know that they've had to also adjust how they present and show homes. Back in the day, you bought a house in the state that it was in and you saw the potential. You could imagine what you wanted. Today, you've got to make sure it's—everybody is smiling, but today you even stage your home, right? Sometimes they make you stage your home because the buyers' needs are different. You've got to suck them in and you've got to appeal to them. Part of that is listening to your real estate agent and the tips that they offer in order to make that a more viable product that you can sell.

We rely on realtors and their expertise to help buyers and sellers both in the market, so we want to make sure you know that we appreciate what you bring to the industry. We certainly need to keep that education ahead of the market, and I know that you guys do that. You do have your certifications and you are continually staying in front of the education piece.

Speaker, I spent a little more time on that than I wanted to, but I wanted to bring a little bit of a different angle to the bill and talk about the pieces that aren't in the legislation.

To wrap up: We know this is about fairness. We know that it's going to help the economy. If real estate agents can incorporate, they'll put more money back in their neighbourhoods. So of course we're going to support the bill. We hope that when it passes second reading and goes to committee—as the member from Timmins says, the government gets to decide what lives and dies in committee. We hope that this will be something that can come to committee so that we can have that full discussion about it, amend the bill so that it's stronger, have feedback from all the players that affect this bill and actually have something that works for people. Other professions have it and real estate brokers deserve the same consideration.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? I recognize the member for King–Vaughan.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker; I appreciate that.

I want to echo the introduction of OREA members in this chamber. I saw Tim Hudak, their CEO, but I also saw a notable individual whom I've known for many years. Matthew Thornton is the vice-president of OREA. He also was my TA at Western, and if Matthew only knew that I'd

be voting on this bill, I submit he would have given me a much more generous mark.

Nonetheless, I can report to him and to all real estate agents in this province that our party is absolutely committed to supporting this vital sector of our economy, that we are determined to unleash the potential in the real estate sector.

I am proud that the member from Sarnia–Lambton has brought forth this legislation, building on the government House leader's legislation—the member from Bay of Quinte—some years ago. It is reassuring to see all-party support. That is promising, especially during Small Business Week, because the engine of this economy—over nine in 10 jobs in this province depend on the vitality of our small business sector. Many of our real estate agents are self-employed. They own small businesses. They contribute to their community. They're proud of our country. It is these types of patriotic, small business people that our party and all parliamentarians should be standing with. I'm very proud to speak in favour of this bill.

I will just open up with a recognition that our caucus is blessed to have members from Willowdale and from Brampton West who are real estate agents themselves, who are able to inform our caucus about how our government could better support this sector. I spoke to the member from Brampton West in great detail about this legislation to understand why we should be supporting real estate and to understand the comparators in other professional industries that have this advantage.

Madam Speaker, I want you to know that when chartered accountants and mortgage professionals and lawyers—the list goes on—are allowed to personally incorporate, for me this is a matter of fairness. The name of the bill, Tax Fairness for Real Estate Professionals, I think is an appropriate short title to describe the motivation. This is about fairness for those who, for many years—for generations—have not been given that advantage. They deserve it because they should be treated like a business when it comes to tax season. There should be no differential.

The bill provides a simple solution that will let realtors keep a bit more of their hard-earned money in their pockets. I think, philosophically, our party, our government, this Premier—he made a choice. We all made a determination to support a political party, a vehicle for prosperity, that is going to put more money back in your pocket.

1430

This bill is absolutely aligned with what our government has done since day one. When we recalled the Legislature in the midst of the summer—an unprecedented recall—it is absolutely congruent with that. It's about putting more money in your pocket. It's about supporting small business. It's about enabling our job creators to continue to succeed in this province, especially when we know that other jurisdictions around us, other provinces, other northwestern states, are doing the exact opposite of what Ontario has done for many years. They were cutting taxes; they were cutting regulations; they were supporting

their small business sector. For 15 years in Ontario, the opposite was true. So it is very positive that our government is moving the yardstick forward for small business and particularly for this sector. When this legislation passes—should it pass—we know, through the studies, that there will be over \$24 million added to our gross domestic product.

I want to enumerate another fact, Madam Speaker, just to contextualize the relevance of the FIRE sector, as it is known—finance, insurance and real estate. That sector represents over 22% of GDP in our country—real estate drove GDP growth by over 19%. Nineteen per cent of that growth is predicated on this sector.

For us, this is about fairness. This is about prosperity. This is about supporting small business during Small Business Week. But it is also very much about ensuring that the engines of our economy, those pillars of our communities, are able to succeed in a very competitive global marketplace.

Madam Speaker, I do want to also mention one notation about other jurisdictions that do this. It is not that Ontario would be the first. In fact, Ontario would follow British Columbia. We would follow Alberta. We would follow Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec and Nova Scotia, where real estate professionals are already permitted to form personal real estate corporations.

I am very proud to be part of a party that is lowering small business taxes, cutting regulations, reducing red tape and investing in our people in a skilled labour market. This is a pathway to prosperity. This is a plan that will get people working. This is a plan that will send a signal to small business—particularly our real estate agents, but among all sectors of the economy—that we value their work, we respect their contribution and we want to make sure they succeed in this province and in this country.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Sarnia–Lambton for his comments.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes, thank you. I guess I got here in the nick of time. I was so engrossed in the member from King–Vaughan’s remarks that I pretty near missed this.

I would like to thank the following members: from Timmins, Thornhill, King–Vaughan and London–Fanshawe. I hope I didn’t miss anybody. I was listening out back. Anyway, thank you very much for standing up and speaking in favour of this bill.

I think all of the members from all three sides have spoken to the importance of this bill. Of course, I want to thank all the realtors who took the time to travel from across Ontario from as far as Timmins, Sarnia–Lambton, London, the GTA, maybe Ottawa—I’m not sure how far anybody came. But anyway, thank you again for your perseverance and for your dedication in coming here today and supporting us and showing your support to all the parties here in this House. We’ll do what we can do to get the bill through committee after—if it passes today. I’d better not get ahead of myself. If we have all-party agreement and it passes here today, as the House leader of the opposition party said, we should be able to move it forward.

I’ll tell you what I would do, before I run out of time: I would urge all the realtors who are here today and watching on the big screen at home to make sure you find out who your MPP is and contact your local MPP, as a realtor, and tell them how important this bill is to you and your colleagues.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Call the Premier’s office.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Yes. He gives his number out, so call the Premier’s office.

But make sure you talk to your local MPP and emphasize how important this bill would be to you and your colleagues. I’m sure that the MPPs, knowing them as well as I do, in all the parties, will certainly respond and encourage us to do the right thing and make this bill law. So thank you—

Hon. John Yakubuski: And get ’er done.

Mr. Robert Bailey: And get ’er done. Promise made, promise kept.

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE
AMENDMENT ACT (GENETIC
CHARACTERISTICS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LE CODE
DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE
(CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉTIQUES)

Miss Mitas moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill 40, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to genetic characteristics / Projet de loi 40, Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne en ce qui a trait aux caractéristiques génétiques.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for her presentation.

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Madam Speaker, today I have the honour of speaking to my private member’s bill. Bill 40, the Human Rights Code Amendment Act (Genetic Characteristics) is the next step we need to take in combatting discrimination in this province. Unlike many other forms of discrimination, discriminating based on genetic characteristics is a somewhat new phenomenon.

I’m sure many members of this House have been asked by a family doctor for their family’s medical history—whether their father died of a heart attack, if high blood pressure is common in their family, or if any relatives have had breast cancer. Since hereditary characteristics are often passed down, a doctor can provide preventive recommendations or treatments which can reduce your likelihood of getting these diseases.

This process is not perfect. Members of your family can pass from unnatural causes. Some diseases like lung cancer can be picked up from a place of work or a smoking habit. For those who aren’t in contact with their blood relatives, family medical history is not an accessible resource that can be counted on for personal health care.

Today, thanks to medical breakthroughs, a computer program can analyze your DNA and genes through a simple blood sample, breaking down exactly what genetic

markers you have inherited. As an example, this type of test may come back and tell you that the breast cancer in your family has no bearing on your personal health. The test may also come back and note that you possess a mutation of the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene. That gene contains tumour-suppressor proteins. When they are mutated, the body is less effective at fighting off abnormal cell growth in the form of cancer. This would have a significant effect on someone's health.

The Canadian Cancer Society estimates that one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer over their lifetime. For women who carry either BRCA mutation, that number skyrockets to 69% and 72%, respectively, if they live to the age of 80, according to a journal article published in 2017.

When you are armed with this type of information, you can prepare and modify your health care accordingly. The anxiety and uncertainty that you were dealing with are gone. It is difficult to even begin to express how valuable that peace of mind is, when it comes to your personal health care, to an individual and their family. Once you have the test results, you can consider what steps are needed to reduce your risk of contracting cancer. Even if you cannot prevent the onset of the disease, this information can mean the difference between a diagnosis at stage one rather than at stage four, which can mean the difference between a high rate of survival and a terminal diagnosis. Lastly, members of your family who share your general family medical history can now make more informed decisions on whether or not to get tested, based on your results.

The positives here are clear: a healthier family and lower mortality rates. These are obviously good things.

Breast cancer is just one example of a disease that genetic testing is helping combat. Consider Huntington's disease: It is a neurological disease that starts with mood issues and lowered mental abilities. Other common symptoms are uncontrollable movements and various motor function issues. With further time, Huntington's disease develops into dementia. While there is no cure, this disease is, again, a genetic disorder. Those who are tested can make decisions well in advance of the disease affecting their functioning and ability to make informed decisions. They can also make choices that are more informed about having children, as the mutation that causes Huntington's is passed down 50% of the time to your offspring.

By getting tested, individuals are also giving researchers the opportunity to monitor the progression of Huntington's and other genetic diseases. This can assist in developing treatments to reduce and eventually cure these diseases that are plaguing our society.

I have provided you with only two of a myriad of examples. As technology advances, we will be able to pin down the signs of even more diseases and offer better preventive care to all of our citizens.

1440

The story is not all positive, though. This same genetic information that helps someone make informed decisions

about their own health and health care can be used or interpreted by employers in a negative light. Instead of concern for the health of a potential employee, they may be concerned about what the effects are of that employee getting sick in the future and what that will mean for their business and bottom line. This can lead to discrimination in the form of being denied job opportunities, being passed over for a promotion or being let go from an organization. It may not even be certain that someone will eventually have the disease they have been tested for. I mentioned earlier that even when possessing the breast cancer mutation genes, many women will never contract breast cancer. It just means that you have a higher chance of it developing.

There's also a lot of concern over the insurance industry making decisions using genetic testing data. Denying those who have a chance of inheriting a disease the opportunity to leave something behind for their loved ones is not acceptable. As an expectant mother, I cannot imagine being in the position of a parent who cannot get insurance or afford a good plan because an insurance company sees me as a potential liability.

Again, it's not certain that someone will eventually have the disease that they have been tested for or been identified as positive for carrying that marker. This is a scenario where someone is being discriminated against for something they have no control over or were born with. This is wrong and just as bad as other forms of discrimination that are listed in the Human Rights Code. This is a major reason for the reluctance of many people and their family members going to get genetic testing.

The most troubling aspect of this is that insurers or employers are not restricted in asking for this information at all. Getting information about your health is fuel currently that others can use to discriminate against you. They can also use this information against your family. As noted earlier, some diseases have a higher rate of being passed on to your children. If an insurance company is aware that one person has a disease, they can be sure that blood relatives of that family are also more likely to possess those genetic markers and deny them coverage or affect the way they would be covered in the future.

There are stakeholders that want to say that these concerns about discrimination are unfounded, but there have already been stories in the news about people having their genetic information used against them. For example, in 2016 an 18-year-old woman went for a genetic test for BRCA1. Her insurance company cut her off promptly after she tested positive for the gene. Through a lawyer, she eventually qualified for coverage, but at a limited amount. What message does this send to people looking into their own health? The genetic test result and response from the insurance company not only affected her, but it also affected the rest of her family, who have a 50% chance of carrying that gene as well. As a result, neither her mother nor her aunt have applied for insurance in fear of being discriminated against by the insurance companies, and her brother has refused to get tested as well.

This shows that when genetic testing shows a high probability of catching a medical condition in the future,

insurance companies use this as enough to make up their mind and refuse people coverage. A variety of organizations have rallied together under the banner of the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness in order to present a unified front on this issue. For them, this is not only a matter of discrimination; this is a matter of public health. The coalition includes major organizations such as the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation, the Alzheimer Society of Canada and the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada, to name a few. Their work is the reason that we are having this conversation today. They have aggressively pursued legislation to address this issue and have done an outstanding job of bringing it to legislators across Canada. That's why this is not the first time that genetic discrimination has been brought up in this House. The attempt of adding discrimination based on genetic characteristics to the human rights act has long been a topic of discussion in this House. The bill that Bill 40 was based on was introduced by the former member for Eglinton—Lawrence and the current member for Dufferin—Caledon in 2016 but died on the order paper.

Today, discriminating based on genetic characteristics is illegal due to Bill S-201 under federal legislation. It was an uphill battle in Parliament to have it passed, fuelled by concerns of the insurance industry and jurisdiction issues. Many of the government's members voted against the legislation. This included the current Minister of Justice. The federal government has already indicated that they will refer the bill to the Supreme Court when it receives royal assent. Legal experts are already weighing in with their expectations. A prominent law professor at the University of Ottawa, Carissima Mathen, was quoted by the *Law Times* as saying, "In recent years, the court has expressed concern about using the criminal law in a regulatory rather than prohibitive manner." The regulatory function of course normally falls under our jurisdiction at the provincial Legislature.

The Coalition for Genetic Fairness has expressed confidence that the legislation will hold under review, but we still need to play our part in ending genetic discrimination in Ontario. Even if this legislation does hold, being able to take a case of discrimination to the Human Rights Commission is a much lower barrier to entry. It will allow people to get the justice that they deserve.

If the Supreme Court sides with the Minister of Justice federally, then this legislation is all the more needed here in the province of Ontario.

I know that there will be concerns on whether this legislation goes far enough from some. I would like to make it clear to everyone in this House that I'm open to amendments to strengthen this legislation further. I expect action to address genetic discrimination to be a completely non-partisan effort.

Earlier in my speech, I talked about the advances of technology meaning that more discoverable genetic markers, and the diseases they are related to, will be identified. Right now, this is an issue that many Ontarians are not thinking about on a daily basis, but this issue, with

our technological advances, will only grow into a larger one with time if it is not dealt with now.

I'm looking forward to working with everyone in this House to ensure that this bill passes with the most support possible from all sides.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. John Vanthof: It's always an honour to stand in the House and—I've said it before, but I'll say it again—particularly on Thursday afternoons, because Thursday afternoon is when we discuss far-ranging topics: realtors and now protection of genetic characteristics under the Human Rights Code. I have to say that when I got elected in 2011, I never thought I would ever be talking about genetic characteristics under the Human Rights Code—just not up my alley—but I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for bringing forward this worthy bill, a bill which we are going to support, a bill that has been brought forward before and is worthy of bringing back again.

I think this is a bill that, 20 years ago, didn't have a purpose, right? The member for Scarborough Centre did a very good job of explaining what genetic testing actually is and how it could be used against people. She did a really good job with that. She brought up some issues that I hadn't—I did a bit of research; I read the Hansards from last time. But she brought up some information that I hadn't thought of. It could be that, without protection, your own genetic characteristics or the genetic characteristics of your family could be used, I would say, potentially as a weapon against you and could make your life or the life of your family difficult. Obviously you can't control your own genetic characteristics.

A point that she brought up is that for some, just because you have a genetic marker, it isn't a guarantee that you're actually going to have the condition for which you have a genetic marker. So you could be doubly punished.

I appreciate very much that at the end of her presentation, she said that she was open to strengthening this legislation. In the preamble, it mentions that "insurance contracts are permitted to differentiate or make a distinction," and one of the places where you could really be hurt by genetic characteristics is insurance because, let's face it, insurance—let's use life insurance. Let's use language that people understand: Life insurance is a gamble. The company is gambling that you're going to die early, and you're gambling that you're going to die late, right? That's what insurance is. That's what life insurance is. I don't fault companies for that. That's life, right? But if they have access to genetic characteristics, it kind of tilts the deck in their favour. I think that's one that, if we're serious about doing it—and we are—we need to take a long look at that, so that when people purchase insurance—and it's also to keep everything above board and make sure that people aren't saddled with a very good case of discrimination.

1450

I can honestly say that I'm a 55-year-old white guy, and I'm not discriminated against a lot. I mean, let's be honest

here. We have our issues in northern Ontario, but we are not the typical candidate for discrimination, over history.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, you're Dutch.

Mr. John Vanthof: Yes, I'm Dutch. That's the problem.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: No, that's not what I meant.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Mr. John Vanthof: I've totally lost my train of thought, Speaker.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It's all my fault.

Interjection: Genetic discrimination.

Mr. John Vanthof: Genetic discrimination. One thing about this, and one thing about discrimination: Discrimination has developed over centuries, and it still exists. This is discrimination that we have identified pretty early on. So if our society is really moving forward, this is one that we can identify and move on before it becomes rampant. It isn't rampant yet.

I have never had one of those tests done. Quite frankly, I'm a bit worried about getting one of those tests done. Who knows what I'll find?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: You might find out you're British.

Mr. John Vanthof: Or partly French?

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Interjections.

Mr. John Vanthof: But back to a serious note, because this is a very serious bill: This is a case where the member has identified—and the members before her—a potentially very serious discriminatory practice which could be emerging. She has identified that it could be made stronger. I commend her for that. I believe that we should work together and hopefully, this time, get this bill actually to fruition and move ahead.

I'd like to thank the member. Speaker, thank you for your time and your indulgence. I would not like to thank the member from Timmins.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I've already been admonished once.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): A reminder to all members, not only the member for Timmins, that it is far easier to hear the debate if it is just the individual speaking and sharing their remarks.

Further debate?

Mrs. Gila Martow: Of course, I'm very pleased to rise and speak on the first private member's bill by my new colleague from Scarborough Centre. It's titled Bill 40, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to genetic characteristics. We're talking today about the fact that people in Ontario and in the rest of Canada can be discriminated against, based on their genetic makeup.

What does that mean? That means we're all a product of our genes. Oftentimes doctors might even recommend that you go and get genetic testing if somebody in your immediate family had a disease that has genetic markers. What happens is, you go and you get the genetic testing,

and you might find out that, yes, indeed, you do have a mutation of some type; you've inherited something from your ancestors. That could possibly help in your treatment. It might help you go for more testing. If you have the BRCA gene for breast cancer, you might get mammography more often. You might have breast ultrasounds or things like that added to your testing regimen.

But all of a sudden, you've put yourself at risk, possibly, for discrimination by future employers. Or your own employer might not want to advance somebody who is at risk of developing a serious disease. You can be discriminated against, based on getting some kind of insurance coverage. We've even heard stories of people being discriminated against in housing and leases and things like that.

So it's a bit shocking that this should be the case. Across the world, we are lagging behind here in Ontario in addressing this type of discrimination.

The federal government worked on a bill, S-201, that passed with not all unanimous support, but with enough support to pass. What we're being told is that when it does pass royal assent, they plan to refer it to the Supreme Court, which could possibly block it, and then we're kind of back to square one.

The province of Ontario, of course, is concerned with anything to do with employment and insurance and housing—it's really under provincial jurisdiction.

I spoke on this before. I represent Thornhill, which is one of the most Jewish-populated ridings in the country, not just in the province. This is of particular concern in the Jewish community, especially in the eastern European Jewish community, of which I am one—we call it Ashkenazi. We have a lot of genetic markers. I guess it was a smaller gene pool. We've had articles in Canadian Jewish News and other publications about concerns that people won't go for genetic testing, or that if they do go for genetic testing they might regret it. It's certainly something that we have to think about in this age of increased technology.

We know that there are many advances in terms of not just treatments, but in terms of genetic testing. We want to ensure that we are protecting the public from discrimination. People shouldn't have to make a human rights complaint based on their genetic makeup. Obviously, we are all very well aware of discrimination based on what people can look like or something else. But your genes are quite invisible, and you have to go for the genetic testing to know what's going on.

So I'm very pleased to rise and support this. It's the second time that I know of that it's being brought forward. I spoke on it previously when it was the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport—the member from Dufferin-Caledon, she was at that time—and the past member from Eglinton-Lawrence from the Liberals. This time, I look forward to our government—hard at work, slightly over 100 days old—getting to work and getting this passed with all-member support.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Ms. Suze Morrison: First off, I'd like to thank the member for Scarborough Centre for bringing this bill forward today.

I certainly join my New Democrat colleagues in our shared vision for an Ontario where people can live their best lives and live free from all forms of discrimination.

Currently, our Ontario Human Rights Code is quite comprehensive. It protects people from race; colour; ancestry; creed; place of origin; ethnic origin; citizenship; sex, including pregnancy, gender identity and gender expression; sexual orientation; age; marital status; family status; disability; and receipt of public assistance—but obviously, this is a list that we can always keep expanding on.

This bill seeks to expand those grounds to include genetic characteristics, which the bill defines as any trait that may cause an individual to have an increased risk to develop a disease or disorder. In simpler terms, this bill means that folks in Ontario will have the right to equal access to health care, equal access to treatment, equal access to services, and better protections in the workplace from discrimination if they have a genetic trait that may put them at a higher risk of illness. It protects them whether or not they choose to disclose that very personal information of any genetic tests they may have had done or not.

For example, the BRCA1 gene, which is one that some of my colleagues may be familiar with, is a gene that's linked to higher rates of breast cancer in women. The genetic test for this marker is one that's commonly undertaken if there has been a history of breast cancer in the family. Many women make substantial and very significant decisions about their health care based on the information they get from those tests, including preventively undertaking mastectomies to protect themselves. These decisions are private and personal, and if a woman in that position chooses to disclose the results of a test or not, they shouldn't be discriminated against in how they receive their health care.

I'm sure that I join every single one of my colleagues in this House in saying that no woman should ever be denied equal access to health care because of her genetic tests and her genetic characteristics.

1500

New Democrats have been long-time champions of human rights. We've worked over the years to update the Human Rights Code, including, for example, the addition of gender identity and gender expression, through a bill that the former member of this House from Parkdale–High Park, Cheri DiNovo, championed vigorously in this House.

As I speak to this bill today, I reflect on a story that my colleague from Beaches–East York shared earlier about her very proud and openly trans daughter. I think about how much the addition of that ground to our Human Rights Code has made her daughter's life better. Trans rights, like all human rights, have never been easily achieved or necessarily freely given. We've had to fight for them, and fiercely so, to move ourselves toward a more

progressive and inclusive society where everyone is equally valued and free to live their lives. That fight has often come at the expense of people who have faced discrimination but have taken their stories and shared them as a way of shining a light on the gap in our human rights system.

While I support this bill's addition of genetic characteristics to the Human Rights Code, I would be entirely remiss if I didn't highlight one glaring issue that I see with this bill as it's currently written, and that is, as my colleague from Timiskaming–Cochrane also spoke to, the exclusion of insurance companies from this legislation. I think it's absurd that insurance companies in this province should be allowed to openly and freely discriminate against people just because of their genetic characteristics. What good are human rights if we only enforce them in some situations but not others, or if we allow discrimination to exist just because it lines the pockets of the wealthiest among us? What good are human rights if we're only willing to expand them in theory but not in a meaningful way that effects lasting and effective change?

Speaker, I'd like to share a small story about my mom today. It's a good day when I get to speak about her in this chamber. My mom, a single mom with a disability, decided to go back to university when I was nine. She was a student at U of T all throughout my teenage years. Every semester, when it would come time to pick up her OSAP papers, the building where the registrar and the clerks were was not accessible. So I would take a day off school and accompany my mom to campus, walk myself into the building and bring clerks out onto the sidewalk to help my mom complete her paperwork there on the road. While those clerks were always helpful, we shouldn't be relying on the kindness of strangers in how we implement human rights. It needs to be a protected right within our system. All I can say is that we need legislation that comes without loopholes and exemptions where we allow one business sector to completely exempt itself from our human rights.

This bill starts in the right place, and I'm happy to support it today despite this exemption. But I encourage my colleague across the way to really think about how this legislation can be improved. Let's remove the insurance exemption and let's pass a good piece of legislation today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. David Piccini: It's an honour to rise before the House today to speak in favour of this bill put forward by my hard-working colleague from Scarborough Centre. She did an excellent job here.

Let me begin by stating the obvious, Madam Speaker: We are all humans and, as such, we have immutable characteristics, such as race, sexual orientation, age, creed and many more. These traits, among others, are protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code, and rightfully so. Simply put, we are equal before the law.

On the one hand, Ontario has a great history of being the first government in Canada to enact a Human Rights Code, in June 1962, under the then Progressive Conservative government. On the other hand, we must acknowledge

that Ontario does have a darker history of discriminating against marginalized people based on their immutable characteristics. We've heard countless stories throughout our history of people not getting jobs, not getting housing, based on their race, based on their identity, their gender, their sexual orientation. Simply put, this is wrong.

The Human Rights Code is a living document. We've heard it addressed today. It's a living document that must change, that must evolve, with society. The code is fine and it needs more reform, and this is what this bill is doing.

The original 1962 code was not as comprehensive, but it was a start. It consolidated multiple fairness and anti-discrimination acts and put them into one unified code that sent a strong message to Ontarians, and Canada as a whole, that discriminating against someone based on their immutable characteristics is a grave human rights violation.

The code has been amended a few times since 1962, because human rights, and what constitutes human rights, continue to evolve every year.

In 1986, sexual orientation was added to the list of characteristics.

In 2012, under the then Liberal government, gender identity and gender expression were added to the list of prohibited grounds.

Madam Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. This is an Ontarian issue. To protect the identity of all Ontarians is an issue we all deeply care about in this place.

Let me shift gears briefly and speak about genetic characteristics.

I know that members of this House have heard me say the words "immutable characteristics" a few times already, but let's break that down a bit. The UN defines this as any physical trait that may be innate or unchangeable for other reasons.

My genetic characteristics and makeup are physical traits that are innate. As such, I should not face discrimination based on them. It's simple: If I have a genetic trait that might cause or increase the risk of developing a disorder or disease, is that grounds to not be employed? Is that grounds to be dismissed from my job? Of course not. It's discriminatory. We all know deep down that this is wrong and that this should not happen to any Ontarian.

Adding Bill 40 to the provincial Human Rights Code will provide more detailed steps and processes for those who have been discriminated against based on their genetic characteristics. It will not hurt anyone to add genetic characteristics to our code. On the contrary, it's the right thing to do. It ensures greater equality in our workplace.

In closing, I just want to remind every member here that we all have immutable characteristics. I'm sure many members here, in the past, have felt marginalized at times and have faced similar forms of discrimination. But to hear "We regret to inform you that you did not get this job because you did not provide a genetics test," I think we can all agree here, is ridiculous. It's outrageous.

I think that this bill brought forward—I'm pleased to see support on both sides of the House. I think the member

from Scarborough Centre has done an excellent job in what she has done here. I think this is a right step forward. I've heard great feedback from members of my community, and I'm very pleased to be supporting this bill today.

This shouldn't happen in Ontario in 2018, Madam Speaker. It's not right, and I'm really pleased to stand behind the member for Scarborough Centre and support this.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mrs. Robin Martin: I'm very pleased to rise today to speak in support of Bill 40, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to genetic characteristics.

I want to begin by thanking the member from Scarborough Centre for bringing this bill forward. This is an important issue to a number of my constituents in Eglinton–Lawrence and one that certainly transcends party politics.

If passed, Bill 40 will amend the Ontario Human Rights Code to include genetic characteristics as a prohibited ground of discrimination alongside existing protections in the act, including race, marital status and disability among others.

It will complement similar legislation that was passed last year at the federal level, Bill S-201, which applies many of the same protections proposed in Bill 40 to areas under the federal government's jurisdiction.

The reason why these protections are needed is simple: Genetic testing has never been easier, more popular or more accessible to Ontarians. I'm sure many members have seen advertisements on television or online for services such as AncestryDNA, 23andMe and others. The way these services work is that they mail you a saliva test kit, and then the consumer prepares the sample by following the simple instructions and mails it back to the company's lab for analysis.

1510

While many people utilize these tests because they want to find out more about their ancestry or their heritage, the same test can also provide an assessment of inherited traits or genetic disorders. Let me be clear: The availability of affordable and accessible genetic testing is a good thing. But even if an individual undertakes a genetic test and finds out they carry a gene that makes them more susceptible to a specific disease or condition, there is no guarantee that they will ever actually get that condition. What they can do with this information, however, is use it to make medical or lifestyle decisions that can reduce their risk of illness later in life.

I'm sure other members agree that we should be enabling Ontarians to make these positive choices for themselves. But right now, many people will opt to avoid genetic testing, like the member opposite who spoke earlier on this, out of a fear that the results of the test may be used against them or against their family members in the future. That's why we need protections in law to ensure the results of genetic tests are not used to deny insurance coverage or employment. While avoiding an AncestryDNA or 23andMe test may not be a life-or-death

situation, there are many other reasons why an individual may be encouraged to undertake genetic tests—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Thank you.

I return to the member from Scarborough Centre for her wrap-up.

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Thank you to the members for Timiskaming–Cochrane, Thornhill, Northumberland–Peterborough South, Eglinton–Lawrence and Toronto Centre. I would also again like to thank the former member for Eglinton–Lawrence and the current member for Dufferin–Caledon for the invaluable work—

Interjection.

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Thank you for the wave—they have done preceding the re-introduction of Bill 40 today.

I'm heartened to see all sides coming together to support this important bill. No one in Ontario should be afraid to undergo genetic testing that may improve their lives both in length and in quality. I will reiterate that it is not acceptable for genetic characteristics to be used as a basis of discrimination for any reason. I'm committed to working with all members of the House to ensure that this bill does not die, that genetic characteristics are, in fact, added to the Human Rights Code as something that individuals cannot be discriminated against for and that both the labour and insurance markets are bound by this.

I will note that the insurance industry has not been exempted from complying with the proposed changes under the current iteration of the bill. I will also repeat that strengthening this bill further is my absolute intent, and I will be working with all stakeholders to do so.

I previously taught about genetic testing as a high school biology teacher, and I really look forward to now being able to bring this change about provincially with all of my colleagues, so I'm just thankful for this opportunity. I would like to thank everyone again for your support and look forward to working on this further.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(HELMET EXEMPTION
FOR SIKH MOTORCYCLISTS), 2018

LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (EXEMPTION
DE L'OBLIGATION DE PORT DU CASQUE
POUR LES MOTOCYCLISTES SIKHS)

Mr. Sarkaria moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 41, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to exempt Sikh motorcyclists from the requirement to wear a helmet / *Projet de loi 41, Loi modifiant le Code de la route pour exempter les motocyclistes sikhs de l'obligation de porter un casque.*

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98, the member has 12 minutes for his presentation.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I'm very proud to rise here today in the House to speak to this private member's bill. I just want to take an opportunity to thank all the members in the gallery for coming here today from across the province. I want to take a special opportunity to recognize some of the members who have been working so hard and tirelessly on this exemption from the start—probably over 10 years—members of the Sikh Motorcycle Club and President Inderjit Singh Jagraon, who is also here with us today. I want to commend their work and their efforts in bringing this forward to exempt members of the Sikh faith who habitually wear a turban to ride their motorcycle.

This bill aims to respect members of the Sikh faith and their right to religious expression and freedom. The exemption currently exists in Canada in provinces like British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba. It also exists in countries like the United Kingdom, which has had this exemption since 1976. So it's a very proud moment for me to be here to introduce this bill and have the members support the exemption in Ontario as well. But, Madam Speaker, it's not only for motorcyclists. We see the accommodation of turbans in our military, in the Canadian Armed Forces, in our police forces, and we have soldiers who have fought for Canada dating back all the way to World War I in their turbans as well.

Just to give some context: To understand the significance of the turban, one must understand the philosophy and history of Sikhs. We start with the central concept of the religion, which is opposed to the differential treatment of people for reasons such as gender, race and religion, which is very highly reflected in our teachings, philosophies and practices. We believe in the abolishment of class distinctions and denounce the persecution of individuals based on their race, ethnicity, belief or lifestyle. Sikh scriptures remain universally unique in that they demonstrate many of the principles of equality that Sikhs believe in. Women are given a significant role in Sikh scriptures, which are in many places written in the feminine voice and reflect a belief in a God who is referred to as both mother and father.

Guru Nanak, who was also the founder of the Sikh religion, inspired people to feel the presence of God through hard work, family, community service and defence of the downtrodden. A cornerstone of his philosophy was the emancipation of women, who faced significant discrimination in the 16th century. In the society in which they lived at that time, women were required to hide their faces before men as a sign of humility and respect for men, who held a higher social status at that time. Guru Nanak rejected this tradition and believed in the concept that God had created men and women as equals. Both Sikh men and women at that time were enjoined to cover their heads as a mark of respect and humility before God. In doing so, the Sikh faith reinforced the fundamental equality of both men and women.

From the time of Guru Nanak, the turban became synonymous with the outward identity of a Sikh and has continued to stand for the Sikh belief in gender equality,

humility and supremacy of God. Over the centuries, the Sikh community developed and prospered under the leadership of Guru Nanak and his nine successors, which culminated in the present-day initiation ceremony, which was created in 1699.

For some of the philosophical reasons outlined above and the additional practical reason of covering our unshorn hair, the wearing of a turban is an integral component of the Sikh identity and a sacred article of faith. For practising Sikhs, the turban is essential to their identity and removing it is inconceivable. The turban not only serves a spiritual function—as noted above, it reflects the Sikh belief in gender equality, humility and the supremacy of God—but it also serves the practical function, as I was speaking to before, of covering and keeping in place the uncut hair of a Sikh.

1520

The turban is not only a religious symbol but an article of faith. While items like jewellery may be optional, the turban is mandatory and cannot be removed. Symbols are simply representations of real objects; the turban has a religious significance, but it is much more than just a symbol. The identity of a Sikh is reflected in the wearing of a turban. The turban is not like a hat, in that it cannot be put on and taken off; it is carefully tied every single day in the morning and it is worn at all times indoors and outdoors by observant Sikhs. Some may vary in style and size, but it is inconceivable for those who keep their hair unshorn and are members of the Sikh faith to not cover that hair with a turban.

As a turban is such an integral part of the Sikh identity, being forced to remain without it is tantamount to asking Sikhs to do something which is completely against their beliefs. Sikhs believe that God is everywhere, and as a sign of respect for God and a reflection of their humility and belief in equality between men and women, Sikhs wear the turban everywhere. Just as an individual would be extremely embarrassed to appear in a state of undress, a Sikh would feel a similar level of humiliation in being forced to remove the turban. Bodies across Canada such as police forces and the Canadian Border Services Agency hold the removal of a turban to be tantamount to a strip search.

As it's an integral part of the Sikh identity, Sikhs refused to remove their turbans even when fighting for Canada in the world wars, and for the British as well. To that, I will lead you to some examples. In the last two world wars, 83,000 turban-wearing Sikhs were killed in action and over 109,000 were wounded. They were wounded while enduring shell fire with no other protection but their turban, something that they cannot be without and a symbol of their faith.

I would also like to bring attention to a quote from Lieutenant General Sir Reginald Savory from the world wars, who stated: "I have known Sikhs to pick bullets out of their turbans during and after battle...."

"At the outbreak of World War II, I was serving at A.H.Q. (Army Headquarters). Shortly after, I was sent for by the Commander in Chief, General Sir Robert Cassells. He asked me if the Sikh Regiment was prepared to wear

steel helmets. I replied that they had not done so in World War I, that it was contrary to their religion, that we had never interfered with religious tenets."

Once again, I'm very proud to rise here, with the support of so many members of this House, to speak to this exemption and to thank many of the members who have travelled from so far across this province and the members of the Sikh Motorcycle Club, who have been advocating for this exemption for such a long time within their communities, whether it was in Windsor, Hamilton, Waterloo, London, Kingston or Thunder Bay. It has been an absolute privilege to work with so many of the stakeholders on this issue and to really stand here and express our support for the religious freedoms that we are fighting for in this country and that our men and women who died in the wars for this country have fought to protect.

In conclusion, this exemption, and this bill, if passed, will bring Ontario's laws in accordance with those of British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba, where this exemption currently exists. I look forward to having the support of this House as we take this forward.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gurratan Singh: It is with great honour and privilege that I rise today to speak in support of this bill. I want to acknowledge, first and foremost, that it's amazing to see what we have today in the assembly. We have a full force of members of the Sikh community here today. I think I would be remiss to start without a round of applause.

Applause.

Mr. Gurratan Singh: In our tradition as Sikh people, I feel like today would be the most appropriate day to begin my comments with a traditional Sikh greeting: "Waheguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh," which means, "the sovereign are connected to the divine, but all our successes are because of the divine."

As my friend opposite has already mentioned, we have many, many members and advocates and people who have worked tirelessly to make this issue successful, to bring this issue forward. This has been a community-led initiative. We have groups like the Sikh Motorcycle Club, who have worked tirelessly over the past seven years or more—for decades, they've worked on this issue to bring it forward. We have the president here, Inderjit Singh Jagraon, who I would like to recognize. We have members and advocates across the board.

I have guests who are here. We have lawyer Bikram Singh Bal and his father, Manohar Singh Bal. We have Arjan Singh and Jasbir Singh from Hamilton. We have members from the Guru Nanak Mission Centre in Brampton. We have gurdwaras. We have stakeholders. We have communities across literally, I think, all of Ontario here today. I'm remiss if I have forgotten anyone in my comments.

It is because of their tireless work that we are here today. It is because of their work that we have come to this moment: Finally, Ontario will come in line with many other provinces in Canada, such as BC, Manitoba and Alberta, to come collectively to give this right and this exemption to the Sikh community.

The NDP has an amazingly strong track record on this issue. My brother, Jagmeet Singh, the NDP past representative for Bramalea–Gore–Malton, led the charge on this issue by presenting numerous private member's bills in this House. He led that charge. He laid that foundation upon which we build, a foundation that our leader, Andrea Horwath, then continued in 2017 when she put forward a similar bill.

I was with my brother in these conversations and in this work, and working with the community and having these conversations, to say that this is an exemption which is important and something that the Sikh community deserves. But I would be remiss if I did not mention that this was a journey that did not come without obstacles. This was a journey that did not come without opposition.

The Liberal Party previously gave many, many assurances to the Sikh community that they would work with the Sikh community in order to give this exemption. Some Peel members of the Liberal MPPs at the time had even come out in support of this helmet exemption. But the Liberals turned a blind eye to this very important issue. They failed the Sikh community in working with them to allow this incredibly important accommodation to one of our most central articles of faith, a step forward in allowing this accommodation that strengthens multiculturalism and the celebration of our diversity.

I do, at this moment, also want to recognize the resilience of our community, and the fact that they stayed committed. They kept on working and they kept on fighting hard to ensure that this accommodation came forward. Creating this exemption for Sikh motorcyclists allows Sikhs to ride their motorcycles without having to compromise their faith.

As the member opposite described it, this issue, this idea, this concept, this tradition of the turban is something which is so central to who we are as a people. It is synonymous with being a Sikh.

The turban at the time in South Asia was something that was specifically given to those in royalty, to those who come from that stature and that position. The Sikh gurus, in a method to empower and uplift those individuals who were downtrodden, those who were considered low just by virtue of their birth, gave all individuals turbans as a sign to say that you too are royal, that you too are divine, and that this concept that you are somehow born into subjugation or born into a state that is lesser than others is false. This is the root of why we wear a turban: to empower all individuals, to say that we are all kings and queens, that we are royal, that we are sovereign.

It is also a flag of our beliefs. The Sikh tradition has many, many concepts which are revolutionary even today, and at the time as well—ideas like challenging the caste system; challenging the oppression of women; challenging this notion that we are individuals who are allowed or subjugated, or meant to be put in a position lower than others—and also empowered the community to say that it is our mandate, it is our duty, it is our mission as Sikhs to fight for justice, to fight for not just the benefit of ourselves, but as a concept, as a Sikh tradition, as the Sikh

words say, sarbat da bhalla—the benefit and uplifting of all humanity—a prayer that Sikhs say daily, because to be a Sikh is to fight for all humanity, to fight for everyone. When we wear our turbans, we tell the world loudly and proudly that these are our beliefs, that these are our virtues, that these are our concepts and we cannot hide from them.

1530

There's also a bit of a misconception that I want to clarify today. The turban, as the member opposite described, is gender-neutral. It is something that is worn by men and women, because this is something that was given to empower all peoples.

Once again, the turban covers our uncut hair, which is also born in this belief that to connect to the divine, we hope to keep ourselves in a state that is natural, to keep ourselves in a state that is accepting the will of how we are born and how we are made.

But this tradition, this concept of being identifiable, has also subjected us to a history of racism. In 1914, a boatload of Sikhs came to the shores of Vancouver—what is known as the Komagata Maru incident—and were turned back—a dark period of Canada's history.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Sikhs would face another opposition despite the fact that they were allowed entry into Canada. They faced a barrier in employment. There are countless stories of Sikhs who were told, "If you want to get a job in Canada, you first need to remove your turban and cut your hair." Many of the members who are older than me, here today in the assembly and in the galleries, probably faced this themselves. I can say, even as a young person growing up in Windsor, growing up throughout southern Ontario, on occasion, I too faced issues of racism because of how I looked, because of my identity.

That's why it is so important that this accommodation come forward. This accommodation gives a signal to the Sikh community that we don't just accept your differences, that we don't just tolerate you. To tolerate or to accept is a poverty of ambition. It is to say that, just by being there, you're okay, but that's just about it. I say that is wrong. I say that if we truly want to embrace those other individuals who are different, whom we call—wrongly so—the other, we must celebrate our diversity. We must celebrate those things that make us different. By allowing this accommodation of the turban, we do exactly that. We signal to an entire community that your diversities don't weaken us, they strengthen us, that they are welcomed and they are celebrated.

This idea of bringing in and allowing this accommodation for the turban brings Canada in line and joins us in our history of a strong tradition in Canada—brings us in line with celebrating the right to wear a turban, a right that has been hard-fought in areas like the RCMP and police services. The turban has now become a sign of Canadian identity. It is worn proudly by famous Canadians, like Baltej Singh Dhillon, the first RCMP officer to wear a turban; Palbinder Kaur Shergill, the first BC Supreme Court judge to wear a turban; Harjit Sajjan, our minister of defence; or—I would be remiss if I did not mention—my

brother, Jagmeet Singh, the first leader of a national party who proudly wears a turban. The turban has become a sign of Canada's openness and accepting nature, the way that we accept all those who are different.

Madam Speaker, in this current climate of hate, which is gripping some parts of the world, which is holding back many aspects—and not just the world but here in Ontario as well—this decision to allow this accommodation for the turban shows that we are standing against hate, that we are standing against a concept and a belief and an idea that says we dislike, we fear, we abhor the other. To say that those who wear turbans are celebrated and allowed an accommodation, are able to ride motorcycles without having to compromise their faith by doing so—what we do is, we say to those around the world who would divide us, who would have us hate one another, that they are few and that we are many. By taking this stand, we have a whole generation of Sikhs who now can see that they don't have to compromise themselves, that they don't have to choose between a mode of transportation or who they are in their identity.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to mention why it's so important that this bill becomes legislated and it's so important that this bill goes all the way to royal assent: because we know that the strongest way to protect any community, to protect any right, to protect anything is to legislate it. It is to bring it to royal assent. I look forward to working with the government and all MPPs to ensure that this important value, this important concept, this important accommodation becomes something that does not end here but comes all the way to fruition, all the way into law, because by doing so, we protect this right in the most meaningful way possible.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank all members today who are present and I want to thank everyone in the gallery for providing me with this opportunity to share my words and to speak in support of this very, very important bill—a bill that we've been working on very hard, a bill that my brother put forward many times before in this House. To see it come full circle, to see this bill now come to fruition, is something that truly makes this a historic day, not just for Sikh Canadians, but it makes it a historic day for all Canadians and all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Kaled Rasheed: I proudly stand here in support of MPP Sarkaria's private member's bill, Bill 41, to grant the Sikh community the ability to ride motorcycles without a helmet. Outside of India, Canada has the second-largest Sikh population in the world. Sikh immigration to Canada began in 1897. A second arrival began in 1902, marking the first period of significant migration of Indians from the area of Punjab. Many found work in railroad construction. Another period of migration to Canada followed in the 1920s.

Currently, the Sikh population in Canada is approximately half a million, much higher than in the United Kingdom, which has the third-largest Sikh population in the world. The migration of South Asians from current-

day India and Pakistan from the area of Punjab to the UK began in 1849, generally around the same time period as Canada. As mentioned above, the Sikh and the Punjabi community's roots in Canada are as deep as the Chinese and the majority of other cultures, including European, that initially migrated to our great land to cultivate and build. The Punjabi and the Sikh community has been with Canada throughout its infancy stage, has grown with us, and has formed who we currently are as Canadians and Ontarians.

The wearing of the turban is an essential part of the Sikh faith and identity. Sikhism religion was founded in the Punjab region of modern-day India and Pakistan in the 15th century. The keeping of uncut hair and the wearing of the turban are an integral and mandatory part of the Sikh faith. The turban is an integral part of the body to Sikhs, who do not wear anything in place of, under or over it, such as a hat. The compulsory wearing of the turbans for Sikhs is a unique aspect of not only their faith but also of their racial and cultural identity.

Madam Speaker, Ontario has the second-largest Sikh community in Canada, after British Columbia, which has already enacted a similar law since March 1, 2017. But British Columbia does have the largest Sikh community. It would make sense that they would be the first to enact such a law. We would assume Ontario would follow next because we have the second-largest population. But that is not the case. Alberta, which has the third-largest Sikh population in Canada, has already granted exceptions for drivers or passengers who are over the age of 18 and members of the Sikh religion to ride motorcycles without a helmet.

1540

MPP Sarkaria has been advocating for a helmet exemption for Ontario's Sikh motorcyclists for several years. The Sikh community has urged us to grant this exemption in recognition of its civil rights and religious expression. The government's support of this bill would be a testament to the government's commitment to respecting the diversity and religious rights of all Ontarians.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Amarjot Sandhu: I am very proud to rise today in this chamber to speak on the decision of the Progressive Conservative government to grant an exemption for members of the Sikh religion to ride a motorcycle without the use of a helmet. I welcome all the members of the Sikh community to be part of this very historic day here today. This made Ontario the fourth jurisdiction in Canada to allow this exemption, alongside Manitoba, British Columbia and Alberta, where the helmet exemption for Sikh motorcycle riders is already in place.

Being a proud Sikh myself, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Premier, my friend the member from Brampton South and the Progressive Conservative government for granting this exemption and also for recognizing the civil rights and religious expressions of the Sikh community in Ontario. This reinforces our faith that the Progressive Conservative government for the

people is committed to preserving the civil rights and religious expressions of communities in the province. These are some of the important guiding principles for our government, and we remain committed to them.

This decision by the government of Ontario would permit members of the Sikh community to ride their motorcycles without having to remove their turbans. This shows a deep respect for the customs and traditions of the Sikh community, as wearing a turban is an integral part of the Sikh identity. This decision is a testament to the government of Ontario's commitment to respecting the religious rights and diversity of all Ontarians. And working as a member of the responsible Progressive Conservative government, I am proud to say again: "promises made, promises kept." After so many years of all talk and no action, I'm incredibly proud to be part of a government that is truly for the people and truly does what we say we're going to do.

As a government, we have always strived to accommodate free expression responsibly, especially when such expression does not restrict or harm others. Such exemptions in some other Canadian provinces and even in the United Kingdom have already been a success without compromising the safety of roads. It was very unfortunate that the previous Liberal government of Ontario, under Premier Kathleen Wynne, remained adamant on its stand to deny Sikhs this basic right.

Madam Speaker, wearing a turban is a practice dictated by our faith; therefore, compulsory helmet laws, particularly for the Sikh community, sound oppressive. It would be extreme arrogance to assert that members of the Sikh community should wear helmets despite the fact that mandatory wearing of helmets have inherent practical and religious challenges for the Sikh community. This represented unwarranted and petty religious discrimination. Despite this, the Liberal government remained insensitive and indifferent to the aspirations of the Sikh community and all Ontarians in general.

To all the wonderful people in Brampton West and in Ontario: As part of the responsible Progressive Conservative government for the people, I would reassure that this government will put your needs and the needs of your families first, because people matter to us.

Once again, I would like to thank the Premier and my friend the member from Brampton South for putting this motion forward and the government of Ontario for this decision, which was long overdue, and for preserving the civil rights and religious expressions of communities in the province. We listen, we care, and we deliver.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Deepak Anand: Today, I'm pleased to join my fellow members to announce that Ontario's government for the people intends to grant members of the Sikh community the ability to ride motorcycles without a helmet. Last week, the member from Brampton South tabled a private member's bill to grant this same exemption in recognition of Sikh motorcycle riders' civil rights and religious expression.

Talking about Brampton, Madam Speaker, I'd like to talk about and recognize my fellow friend from Brampton West who is looking really wonderful, someone that our Premier has described as an "all-star." He has demonstrated a passion for working on the issues that are important for Brampton—be it contributing a bill on insurance, helmet exemptions, as we heard him, or even being a champion of working towards better health care—and I want to remind you—in a timely and an appropriate manner.

Back to the helmet exemption, Madam Speaker: Members of the Sikh community have been calling for a helmet exemption for turbaned Ontario Sikh motorcyclists for several years now—about 10. We promised to establish a helmet exemption for Sikh motorcyclists, we listened to the Sikh community, and today I can say proudly that we are taking action—action to fulfill those promises intended to grant an exemption in the coming days.

I would like to get the help of fellow members: This is another great example of a promise made—

Interjections: Promise kept.

Mr. Deepak Anand: Madam Speaker, we're not the first ones. We heard this from the fellow members as well. Ontario's law will be brought in line with those in Alberta since 2018, BC since 1999 and Manitoba since 2000, where helmet exemptions for Sikh motorcycle riders are already in place.

The wearing of turbans is an essential part of the Sikh faith and identity. Being born in Punjab, I know how important it is. Exceptions for Sikhs have been successfully implemented not only in Canada but in other countries as well. A great example: The United Kingdom, a leader in road safety, had implemented it in 1976.

But, Madam Speaker, I want to stress one more thing. Road safety remains our utmost priority. Our government also believes that individuals have personal accountability and responsibility with respect to their own well-being, but we do recognize civil rights and religious expression. I would like to congratulate the Sikh Motorcycle Club, and I want to say this: The Sikh community now has to show that the exemption will not create any unsettling statistics.

I'd like to stress one more thing, Madam Speaker. I have very little time, but I want to talk about new drivers. Most of the accidents happen because of the new drivers, and now with this exemption, I'm pretty sure there are going to be a lot of riders who will come on board. This is what I would like to advise them: Training is very important.

I'd like to talk about one of my good friends—I'll rather say "my sister"—Navdeep Gill, who is also sitting here. I was introduced to the Sikh Motorcycle Club by Navdeep when we had Ride for Raja. Again, what we learned was that he was wearing a helmet and he died while riding a motorcycle.

With this note, Madam Speaker, I believe training is extremely important. I would like to stress that the Sikh Motorcycle Club could consider that as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I return to the member from Brampton South for his remarks.

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: I want to take a moment to apologize for not recognizing someone very important and someone who has really helped take this private member's bill forward and, without his support, I couldn't have done this: the best transportation minister this province has ever seen, Minister Yakabuski.

I want to thank the minister for all his support, because I know in his riding of Renfrew–Nipissing–Pembroke that he has a very large population of Sikhs, I'm sure. But, no, I want to thank him for all of his work and his help in allowing me to bring this to the Legislature. I couldn't have done it without him. The community is very appreciative. The members in this gallery, the Sikh Motorcycle Club, are very appreciative of the minister as well for his efforts in pushing this exemption forward.

I also want to take the opportunity to thank the other members who have spoken on this: the members for Brampton East, Mississauga–Malton and Brampton West, and my good friend Kaleed from Mississauga East–Cooksville as well.

I want to thank all of the members who have participated in the debate in this House to decide on whether this exemption—which was already granted in Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba, as well as countries like the United Kingdom—can move forward.

I thank all of the members and all of the people here from across the province once again for attending this debate and for listening to me as well.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Consideration of private members' public business has concluded before the expiry of the two and a half hours of time allotted. This House is therefore suspended until 4:26 p.m., at which time I will be putting the questions to the House.

The House suspended proceedings from 1551 to 1626.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): The time provided for private members' public business has expired.

TAX FAIRNESS FOR REAL ESTATE
PROFESSIONALS ACT, 2018

LOI DE 2018 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ FISCALE
POUR LES PROFESSIONNELS
DE L'IMMOBILIER

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): We will deal first with ballot item number 22, standing in the name of Mr. Bailey.

Mr. Bailey has moved second reading of Bill 38, An Act to amend the Business Corporations Act and the Real Estate and Business Brokers Act, 2002 with respect to personal real estate corporations.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 98(j), the bill is referred to the Committee of the Whole House unless—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Standing Committee on General Government.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Is the majority in favour of this bill being referred to the Standing Committee on General Government? Agreed.

HUMAN RIGHTS CODE
AMENDMENT ACT (GENETIC
CHARACTERISTICS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT LE CODE
DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE
(CARACTÉRISTIQUES GÉNÉTIQUES)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Ms. Mitas has moved second reading of Bill 40, An Act to amend the Human Rights Code with respect to genetic characteristics.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Miss Christina Maria Mitas: Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All in favour of the bill being referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly? Agreed.

HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT
(HELMET EXEMPTION
FOR SIKH MOTORCYCLISTS), 2018
LOI DE 2018 MODIFIANT
LE CODE DE LA ROUTE (EXEMPTION
DE L'OBLIGATION DE PORT DU CASQUE)

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Sarkaria has moved second reading of Bill 41, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to exempt Sikh motorcyclists from the requirement to wear a helmet.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

Second reading agreed to.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Which committee?

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order. The member: Which committee?

Mr. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria: Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): All those in favour of it being referred to the Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly? Agreed.

Now you clap.

Applause.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

TIME ALLOCATION

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I move that, pursuant to standing order 47 and notwithstanding any other standing order or special order of the House, when the order of the day is called for resuming the adjourned debate on government order number 4, the Speaker shall put every question necessary to dispose of the order and any amendments thereto; and

That, except in the case of a recorded division arising from morning orders of the day pursuant to standing order 9(c), no deferral of the vote shall be permitted; and

1630

That, in the case of any division related to government order number 4, the division bell shall be limited to 10 minutes.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved government notice of motion number 12. Further debate?

Mr. Vincent Ke: It is my honour to present my inaugural speech as the member for Don Valley North.

Applause.

Mr. Vincent Ke: Thank you.

First of all, I want to congratulate all members on both sides of the House on their successful election. I look forward to working with you at Queen's Park.

I want to acknowledge my wife, Changhong, and my son, Han, for their love and support as I begin a new position.

I want to thank the residents of Don Valley North who have given me the opportunity to represent them at Queen's Park. Don Valley North is a great riding. It deserves great leadership.

We had an amazing campaign with nearly 200 full- and part-time volunteers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them again for their hard work and support. I would especially like to thank my campaign chair, Joe Reis; senior adviser, Ted Zhou; and campaign manager, Christina Liu, for their leadership, support and encouragement. I would not be here without them.

I represent Don Valley North. It is a new riding. It was formed from the ridings of Willowdale and Don Valley East. I would like to thank former Willowdale MPP David Zimmer for his years of service to my constituents. I would also like to advise the member from Don Valley East that I will serve his former constituents to the best of my ability.

As I said, Don Valley North is a great riding. It features world-class shopping opportunities at Fairview Mall and Bayview Village. The Sheppard subway line runs through and ends in our riding. We want to see it extended.

We are also home to North York General Hospital, which houses one of the most visited emergency rooms in Canada.

The Seneca College Newnham campus is also in our riding. More than 11,000 full- and part-time students study there in a wide variety of fields.

We are also home to many businesses, large and small. The spirit of entrepreneurship and fiscal responsibility is alive in Don Valley North.

We are made up of several neighbourhoods: Bayview Woods, Bayview Village, Henry Farm, Parkway Forest, Don Valley Village, Pleasant View, Shawnee Park and Hillcrest Village. We are a vibrant mix of residents, young and old, of all backgrounds. We are families, young couples, senior citizens, new Canadians and lifelong residents. We are homeowners and renters. We live in apartment buildings, condos, townhouses and single-family homes. We take all forms of transit to work, and we drive. We are Toronto residents and proud of it.

I will make it my highest mission to dedicate myself to Don Valley North.

On June 7, I won the privilege of being elected MPP. Before my election, I worked as a design and development engineer for over 25 years. This was a field of work I did spanning three countries and continents: China, Germany and Canada.

Canada is a land of opportunity where people of all backgrounds can come to raise their families, progress in their careers and begin a new life. Ontario is the place I call home after coming here from Germany, and before that, my birth nation, China.

I was raised a working-class home in a small town called Jinjiang in Fujian province on the Taiwan Strait. My parents had seven children. I was the first one from our village to ever get a university education, and the first one to receive a master's degree. My parents were very proud of me. I wish they were still alive to see me now, addressing this House.

I did my undergraduate studies at Fuzhou University. I met my wife while at university. We were classmates. After graduating, we worked as engineers in Beijing.

I decided to further my education and career in Germany. After one year, my wife came to join me. I received my master's degree in electronic engineering from Ruhr University in Bochum, located in the western part of Germany. I studied and worked in Germany for eight years. My son was born there.

Twenty years ago, I made the decision to move my family to this lovely country. We landed in Toronto. Toronto was our first home in Canada. My son was four years old at that time. He received an excellent education in Canada. We will always be thankful for that. He is working as an engineer as well. My wife and I are very proud.

Canada is a democratic, multicultural and beautiful country. This is a nation of opportunities. It is the best country in the world to live in. We are very proud.

1640

When I arrived in Canada, I wanted to be successful in my field of work. I also wanted to give back to my new country and home. I have been deeply involved in the local community, with over a decade of volunteer work. With the Quanzhou Association, we established a scholarship and encouraged outstanding high school and university students to apply. We organized volleyball, badminton,

basketball and table tennis competitions. We arranged skiing trips. We hosted educational seminars on health care, employment and welcoming newcomers.

I established a dragon dance team and participated for the last three years in the St. Patrick's Day parade and in Toronto's Santa Claus parade last year. What I most enjoyed was helping to establish two dragon boat teams to participate in the Toronto International Dragon Boat Festival. I am proud to say that as captain of both the Quanzhou Association team and the Fuzhou University Alumni Association team, we have won seven championship competitions at different levels.

Because of my contributions, my colleagues nominated me for a 10-year Ontario Volunteer Service Award. I was honoured to receive this award earlier this year.

Through my involvement with the community, I became interested in politics. Serving my community led me directly into my new position as member of provincial Parliament for Don Valley North. I am the first first-generation Chinese Canadian immigrant MPP with a mainland Chinese background to represent the PC Party in the Legislature's history. I am very humbled to hold this distinction.

I won my election alongside my 75 PC caucus colleagues. The people of Ontario voted for change. In forming a new government, we intend to deliver that change.

During the campaign, I knocked on doors every day. I spoke with constituents and listened to their concerns. Residents of Don Valley North were concerned with skyrocketing hydro rates. These were the result of the cap-and-trade carbon tax and the high-priced green energy contracts introduced by the previous Liberal government.

I am proud to be a part of our government, which is working to reduce hydro rates by 12%.

I am glad our government has brought legislation to eliminate the cap-and-trade program, which raised the price of gas. We have already reduced gas prices by 4.3 cents per litre. Our government plans to reduce gas prices up to 10 cents per litre.

Under our government, Ontario is open for business. Ontario will be a more affordable place to live.

Many residents of Don Valley North described the terrible traffic gridlock throughout the riding and the city of Toronto.

They expressed frustration with politics as usual. We have passed legislation for a smaller Toronto city council. Issues that require city approval will receive meaningful consensus.

Crumbling infrastructure, housing backlogs, traffic gridlock and transit will be addressed by our government.

I am fighting for the Sheppard subway line extension from Don Mills station to Scarborough Town Centre. Our government will build subways like this province has never seen before.

The tragedy of hallway health care is concerning to all Ontarians, especially those in Don Valley North. We will work to put this to an end. Our government has announced an investment that will create 6,000 new long-term-care

beds in Ontario. This will lead to 15,000 new long-term-care beds in five years and 30,000 new long-term-care beds in 10 years. I take very seriously the well-being of my constituents and all Ontarians. Hallway health care is unacceptable and will end under our government.

The parents of Don Valley North raised another issue. They strongly felt that they were not respected or consulted when it came to the sex education curriculum brought in by the previous government. We made a clear promise to replace the entirety of Ontario's current sex ed curriculum with one that is age-appropriate and based on real consultation with parents.

When Ontario voters chose their new government, they did so knowing that this was our intended course of action. Our commitment to Ontario parents has remained firm. At the same time, I know that there are people who feel differently. To that end, our government is engaging in a thorough consultation with parents and stakeholders. This includes an online survey, telephone town halls in every region of Ontario, and a submission platform that will allow interested individuals and groups to present detailed proposals to the Ministry of Education.

Our government is aggressively pursuing our mandate. We know Ontarians voted for change; we will deliver that change. I look forward to working with my colleagues from all sides of the House over the next four years. We will make the Ontario government work better for all Ontarians and my constituents in Don Valley North.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to deliver my inaugural speech to the House today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): I recognize the member from King–Vaughan on a point of order.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I am seeking unanimous consent to permit the President of the Treasury Board to speak for a second time.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Do we have unanimous consent? Okay.

Further debate? I recognize the President of the Treasury Board—

Interjections.

Interjection: Best president ever.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: “Best president ever.” I love the ring of that.

It's a real honour to be here. I feel privileged and honoured to be a minister in the government of Premier Ford. I thank him and the whole team for the opportunity to serve in this administration.

As I rise to address the Speaker and the House, I'm reminded of two things that I learned on my first day here in orientation, having been in the private sector for my whole career. There is an owl facing this side of the government, on the arches above. That's to remind this side of the House to be wise. On that side of the House, where many of my colleagues were for a number of years, I believe it's an eagle up there. The idea is to make sure that they watch over government for the people of Ontario. There are many things that are quite significant in this

House. There's a lot of tradition. I hope I can rise up to that standard.

I want to acknowledge many of my caucus colleagues who are here today—I was surrounded by all my friends until a few moments ago, until you guys crossed from your chairs—and also some of my Durham colleagues. The Minister of the Environment couldn't be here, Mr. Rod Phillips; and my parliamentary assistant—not mine—Lindsey Park. I almost took her from you, Minister. Also, I'd like to acknowledge the MPP from Whitby, Lorne Coe, and also—

Interjection: He's right here.

1650

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Oh, he's right here? There you go.

Mr. Lorne Coe: I moved down.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I looked over there. Here he is, a real gentleman and a great friend. Of course, Madam Speaker, you're from Durham. That rounds out the Durham team—

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Oshawa.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Oshawa. Yes, that's right. Did I say the member from Durham? Thank you for that correction, Madam Speaker. Of course, Lindsey Park is from Durham. But that's part of the Durham team.

I also want to acknowledge—I just want to make sure he's here. Maybe he's not here now—no, he's right there—my parliamentary assistant for the Treasury Board, Stan Cho from Willowdale.

I also want to acknowledge very importantly a number of people in the audience here today in my family. First off, I want to acknowledge my mother, Ester Bethlenfalvy, who is here.

Applause.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: There are a lot of people, so maybe hold off on the applause. There are a lot of people to acknowledge here. My two beautiful sisters, Carla and Sylvia Bethlenfalvy—I had to look down because I choked up for a second.

My beautiful wife sitting beside Sylvia, Paula Hughes—thank you for being here.

I want to give a shout-out. I'm going to look to the camera because I have my father at home—he's 88 and he just went through emergency surgery—Nicholas Bethlenfalvy.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Is he okay?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: He's okay.

Applause.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you. I really appreciate that. That's very kind.

He's 88. He's Hungarian, so he's stubborn as heck, so he's going to stick with us for a while.

I also have a number of my dedicated campaign team here—and, boy, did we knock on a lot of doors in Pickering and Uxbridge. I want to acknowledge Pat Perry on the far right in the first row, Mike Winterburn and Shawn Byron Beckett. We must have knocked on, Pat, maybe thousands of doors.

Mike, you were there. I met Mike at the Pickering Ribfest. I had a PC t-shirt on, and you recognized me there. You were coming in from Ottawa and the Stephen Harper government, so thank you for doing that, Mike, and being a team player.

Truly, one of my all-stars, Shawn Byron Beckett, who came late to the campaign, but I think he worked harder than I did. So thank you, Shawn.

I have got a great Queen's Park team. Some of them are here and some of them are there. I will quickly say that I've got my chief of staff, Karl Baldauf; Jeff Parker, policy; Alexis Easton, stakeholder relations; Brad Nazar doing issues management; and hiding behind there, I think, is Rachel Strong, director of communications. So thank you, team, for being the best team.

Mr. Stan Cho: And Hayden.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Oh, and there he is hiding: my fellow Hungarian, Hayden Kenez. We actually were in London just last week, and we stopped in a Hungarian restaurant there because we saw it and we're both Hungarian, so—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Did you have schnitzel?

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: We had chicken paprikash, thank you very much.

Interjection.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Well, schnitzel—my mother might want to weigh in on whether it's schnitzel or chicken paprikash, but the member opposite would like an answer.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Schnitzel.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Schnitzel; we've got a vote for schnitzel.

Finally, I want to acknowledge my great constituency staff. I've got the best team in the world. Lynn Klages helps run the office day to day. I've got Aleem Sufi and I've got Safa Khan. I've got Brayden Reid, who is also one of our tireless workers in the riding, representing all constituents, as we all do in our ridings.

I want to also acknowledge the rest of the team that is sitting beside my family. I'll go very quickly: Thomas Robson; Kanivanan Chinniah; Piercon Knezic; I've got—you're hiding back there—Joyce Mankarios; I've got Valerie Leong; I've got Chris Clarke; I've got Ryan Demello; and, I apologize, I don't know the fellow in between those two, but you get a shout-out too.

Madam Speaker, after a long and rewarding career in business, I decided to change the trajectory of my life and run for public office. Specifically, I'm talking about 9/11—living in New York at the time of 9/11. My wife is from New York as well, so we lived this together. One thing that struck me about the awful tragedy of that day a number of years ago is that life can be so fleeting. You sit back and say, "What are you going to do with your life?" I think public service is one of those things, those wake-up calls, that time is so short.

I remember Cecil Rhodes—maybe not the right person to quote—on his deathbed said, "I've got so much to do and so little time." He said that right as he was dying.

We've got lots of life left in us. I think we all in this House feel the same way—so much to do and so little time.

That motivated me to get into politics. It also motivated me to learn how to play guitar. Back in 2001, I could not even tell you what a C chord was. I had no idea. But I went out and I started—

Mr. Gilles Bisson: I can show you a bad one.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: There's one over there. I'd say that's a bad NDP chord.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, you're so bad.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Sorry.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Order.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It was meant in the nicest of ways.

I started off down here on the chord structure and made my way up. It just reminded me, 9/11 did, that many suffered. The message there was, if you have an opportunity to do something, do it now. Don't wait. Life is fleeting.

Applause.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you for that.

I also am very lucky because I've got the opportunity to represent Pickering–Uxbridge in the House—two great communities. In between Pickering and Uxbridge, there are a bunch of hamlets, like Goodwood and Greenwood and Brougham and Claremont, so I'm very fortunate that way.

Pickering–Uxbridge is a microcosm of Ontario. In the mornings, the commuters in Pickering get up at 5 a.m. In fact, MPP Coe, I know you take the 6:08 train from Whitby every morning, and often don't leave here before 8 o'clock. But the farmers in Uxbridge also get up. They don't commute. They go out on the farms and bring us the food that we need in our daily lives.

I'm also fortunate that Pickering has the nuclear station, which brings a number of jobs not just to Pickering but to parts of the region. This then provides 15% of the energy to this whole province. These are good jobs, and it's clean energy. The useful life is over in 2024, and we'll have to transition, but it's done a great service to the community of Pickering and beyond for those years.

We also have coming to Pickering Durham Live, which will be bringing lots of good-paying jobs to the region. That's an important part of what I'm doing there.

In Uxbridge, we have farmers who are embracing technology. In fact, I visited a farm that did not—75 cows and not one person milking those cows. It's quite something to see—technology with lasers. It was something. It's a great riding to represent.

Another thing I've noticed in the great riding of Pickering–Uxbridge is the diversity of the people. It's a multicultural community, and it's got tremendous diversity. I want to quote some of the celebrities. I'll call them some of the celebrities who I certainly think represent Pickering. They've all moved on. One may come back from time to time. But part of that diversity is Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, who spent his childhood in Greenwood at the Greenwood School, where his father

was the schoolmaster. That's where he got his start before packing up and going out west.

But there's also another Canadian. These guitar lessons that I—one of the singers I picked up on was Neil Young. I love Neil Young. He grew up in his teens on Brock Road in Pickering. That's where he got his famous ukulele, which started his career in music. To this day, I try to sing better than Neil Young, but I'm not able to do that, which tells you something.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: That's not so hard to do.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: That was my point. Thank you for pointing that out, member opposite.

Lastly—a shout-out, maybe, to the youth—Shawn Mendes, who is actually a very upstanding person from Pickering, from Pine Ridge Secondary School, who is actually a really good kid. I think he will do great things beyond just his music career and his fame. Those are the roots that we have in Pickering.

1700

With that, I'd like to move into another part of my journey in politics, and that is that I spent some time evaluating financial risk and have been in the financial sector all these years—so many years. I've seen the balance sheet of Ontario. It does keep me up at night, Madam Speaker, because the numbers are sobering.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: It keeps me up at night too.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: You too?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Oh, absolutely.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: “Absolutely.” Thank you for that. We're sharing this journey together, and we all want to do good things in this province. We want to protect core services. But I'm also looking at you, Madam Speaker. Above you is “1867.” Since 1867 to 2003, there was \$140 billion of debt. Since 2003 to now, we've more than doubled that. The first 100-and-so-many years to grow the debt and we're now over a third of a trillion dollars of debt, on our way to half a trillion.

These are numbers that are hard to compute in our daily lives, but what they do mean to me is that if we are able to afford health care, and we all want to support—that's part of why we're here—health care as we age and for our population, including mental health and addiction. We want to support education and be the smartest people in the world so we can graduate for the jobs of tomorrow. We want to build roads. We want to have transit. We want to support social services for those who need it the most. That's a big part of why I'm in politics, Madam Speaker, is to help those.

Let me tell you another story that relates to my family and why this country is so good. I've talked about this before—

Interjection: He's getting choked up.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: I get choked up every time. It's an important part of my life because I grew up with these stories. It was my mother, who's here—there I go again; there you go again. She was nine years old, living in Hungary during World War II. Her father said, “We've got to go. We've got to leave this place.” They weren't exactly popular in Budapest, so he decided to take his

family out, including his parents—my great-grandparents—and the risks in 1943 and 1944 were great. It was not easy to just leave and cross and go to the west at that time—bombs and bullets overhead—but they made it through.

My father left at the age of 19, because he came to Canada for a better life. This is what this country is about. They came to Canada. They met here in Ontario. My father never saw his parents again. At that time, Ontario was a great province and welcomed people from across the world—and we continue to welcome people from across the world. They were able to bring up a family. My mother grew up in Port Colborne, my father here in Toronto. They met here in Toronto and got married.

Back then, since I am a numbers guy and a financial guy, Ontario had a AAA credit rating. Hydro rates: We had the second-lowest in North America in the 1950s and 1960s and beyond—second only to Hydro-Québec in all of North America—and there were good-paying jobs and quality jobs in this province.

Part of what motivates me, what I want to do and why I am working tirelessly along with all of us in this House, is to improve the quality of life for people and have that type of province where people can come from all over and have that type of life, to bring up a family, like my parents were able to do, and hopefully—

Mrs. Robin Martin: There he goes again.

Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy: Thank you. It's tough. I hope that I'm meeting the standards of my father, who's sitting there watching.

All right. That's the part on the family and why I'm so committed to politics.

The path forward here will not be an easy one together. I suspect that we will have some hits along the way. We've been elected, all of us, and we have a commitment to bring back quality jobs in this province, we have a commitment to bring fiscal responsibility to this province, we have a commitment to cut red tape and we have a commitment to protect core services for not just our generation today but future generations. I want to be part of the team that brings back a strong and stable economy in this province to ensure prosperity for all.

We have the choice to be strategic and forward-thinking, but nimble enough to change the course of government. The role of government and services is rapidly evolving. It is evident that the old way of working here is unsustainable, and we have to embrace the new opportunity to take a different approach to job creation and fiscal management, one that is modern, agile, effective and welcomes a customer-centred approach in the digital era, because it's here and it is now.

Let me take a few moments to summarize critical areas where we have to build scale in initiatives for the way forward.

First and foremost, we are sharply focused on making life more affordable for Ontarians and putting more money in the pockets of people.

In our first 100 days of government, we have accomplished so much as a team under Premier Ford and together as a caucus. We have lowered energy costs and scrapped the Drive Clean program. We have expanded access to natural gas, given parents a voice on public education, and reduced WSIB premiums. Not to go over that too quickly, but that is really helping employers in Ontario, helping jobs to be created in this province—all done in a fiscally prudent matter—very important.

In addition, we have kept our promise of restoring trust and accountability through the line-by-line, the Big Bold Ideas Challenge and Planning for Prosperity public consultations. We were very fortunate to receive 15,000 completed surveys in a matter of a few weeks, and 26,000 ideas within those 15,000 submissions on how to modernize and transform government in a more efficient way, so that we could be fiscally sustainable now and for the future. So it's a very engaged consultation that we have been fortunate enough to receive the results of.

Those line-by-line reviews that we got gave us some tremendous ideas, and have allowed me and our team to move the consultation to a conversation with the people of Ontario, so that we can have a path toward more responsible government spending and providing sustainable and better-quality services that meet the demands of not only Ontarians but all front-line workers in Ontario. It will enable us to achieve transformative results that will position Ontario for success.

Since being elected, we have sent the message that Ontario is open for business, especially this week, given that it's Small Business Week here in Ontario. All of us rely on small businesses in our daily lives. From the local coffee shop to the parts manufacturer that employs members of our families, small businesses are the fabric of our communities that help to shape our local cities and regions into great ones.

We will continue to focus on measures that will create an environment that boosts the confidence of small businesses so they can continue to be the backbone of long-term economic growth and prosperity in this great province.

As many small business owners know, managing money well today ensures that you can take care of problems that arise tomorrow. Similarly, as a government, we must be cautious with how money is spent. By being disciplined, the province's finances can be kept in order and take care of those who are most vulnerable and need our compassion the most. These initiatives will recover the momentum of Ontario's economy, welcome and embrace innovation, and reward the efforts of young people and future generations.

We will be able to increase our overall effectiveness and continue to drive the economy forward with a faster drumbeat.

Everything we do is for the people, so let me talk to you a little bit about some of the people who are driving this economy forward, driving society forward, specifically in Pickering-Uxbridge.

I do want to mention some of the leaders, three particular individuals. The first I'd like to mention is our

former riding president, who many of my colleagues over here would know: Myrna Picotte. Myrna Picotte is the recently retired president of the Pickering–Uxbridge riding association, but she's more than that. She has worked tirelessly as the president of Royal Canadian Legion Branch 606 in Pickering, and has given of her time and her life to others in her many, many successful years in Pickering. She was an abused woman from the north who came south to find a better life, and found it in Pickering and in the region of Durham. I want to acknowledge her efforts over the years working with me, working with my team, working with all the great people in Pickering to recognize that service to community is the most important thing you can give to a community.

1710

I also want to acknowledge the current chair of Durham region. Gerri Lynn O'Connor is another woman who has given many years of personal sacrifice in the efforts of public service, formerly as the mayor of Uxbridge, I think over three decades of service, and has continued in that capacity as the chair of Durham region, having stepped in when Roger Anderson, the previous chair from Ajax and ultimately the chair at the region of Durham, passed away suddenly this past summer.

Gerri Lynn was one of the first people I met when I went up to Uxbridge, and she introduced me to many stakeholders and farmers. Now, she may not particularly have always voted Conservative—she may have gone the other way, lost her way—but I will say that doesn't matter. This is not a partisan thing. This is very much a for-the-community person in Gerri Lynn O'Connor. I really appreciated everything she did for the region of Durham and I just want to acknowledge that here.

Finally, I want to comment on someone you may not have heard of—People in Uxbridge certainly have, and maybe people in Durham, but for the province I want to speak about someone no longer with us. Samuel Simpson Sharpe was an extraordinary figure who served his community and country in many ways. He was elected a member of Parliament for Uxbridge, representing the Conservative Party, from 1909 to 1917. At the same time, he was a soldier who fought at Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele. He was elected in absentia in the 1917 election, as he was at the time serving overseas in the military. So he's already a member of Parliament, he's off fighting in the war, and he got elected in absentia.

Unfortunately, Samuel's story ends in tragedy. At the age of 45, he took his own life. He was coming back—I should elaborate a little bit on the reasons why. He had recruited a number of people—the boys and men and women of Uxbridge—to join as part of the company to go to the First World War. Many under his leadership did not return. Those were brutal battles, Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele.

He survived. He fought with them but he survived; 75% did not make it back. Coming through Montreal, my hometown, he stayed at the Royal Victoria Hospital, where he was suffering from what then was probably thought of as shell shock or some mental problem. He took his own life by jumping out the window.

What happened when he did that? All pictures of Samuel Sharpe were taken down because it was not an honourable thing to do in 1917. It was due to the stigma around suicide and mental illness at the time that he was forgotten for almost 100 years.

I'm sharing this story not only because Samuel was from Uxbridge, but I also wanted to highlight the importance of always listening and talking to your peers in the community. We must always show compassion to others. I know that the people of Pickering–Uxbridge embody many positive values, including community, teamwork, perseverance, resilience and commitment. If Samuel had had that community around him in 1917, then I think he would have gone on to have a very fruitful life. That's what serving both as a member of the provincial Parliament and a member of the community is all about. I think that's what we all stand up for.

I also want to mention, in terms of community, that I was very proud when the Royal Canadian Legion in Pickering put a monument out to the veterans from Afghanistan. It's easy to forget—and there weren't many. I had the honour to trek to the magnetic North Pole—I think I've mentioned that before in this House—with 12 wounded veterans who were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. When you go to Afghanistan and do battle to protect democracy and our way of life and you come back. One day you're in the desert and the next day you're shopping at Loblaws in Ottawa or Nepean or wherever you are from. It's incredible. And you don't have a support system. So acknowledging and remembering those who fought before us is critical, in my mind, to supporting others in the community who are defending our way of life.

As I view it, these are some of the key pillars of our society and our province. For a government of the people, there's no question about the importance of trust. We were elected by the province to earn that trust throughout the next four years. Your trust is one of the most important assets we have, and we will never take it for granted.

I'm reminded also of what I'm sure many in this Legislature do. The day after I was elected, I received many, many phone calls—and you forget many; it's a blur. Someone came up to me about a month ago and said, "Do you remember me?" I said, "I don't remember you." His name was Roy, and Roy said, "I called you the day after the election because I had a problem. You called me back and you fixed that problem." I have no recollection of that phone call or fixing that problem, but he was so grateful, and if that isn't what makes everything that we do, the long hours that we all work in public service—that made it all worthwhile. That phone call and that story that came, I guess, just three months after it happened, really made me proud to serve the community and serve others.

The other thing that makes me motivated is that at our victory party, the night we were all elected—many of you were there. Again, it was at the Royal Canadian Legion. I said, "I'm applying tonight. I start my reapplication to get hired as the MPP for Pickering–Uxbridge, and it starts not even two hours after being elected." We have to go back

into our communities, knock on doors, and stay in touch with the people who elected us. It's easy. I sometimes think at Queen's Park it's a bubble. Well, it's not a bubble. It's a steel-and-concrete reinforced barricade sometimes, and there's nothing more beneficial than going out and thinking that to get re-elected, to get hired—you're getting hired; we work for the taxpayers; we work for everyone in our constituency—is to start that process again the night of the election.

That's my mindset. I'm always reminding myself that we represent all the constituents in our ridings. We don't represent one party or another when we are sitting in this Legislature. We often get combative, but we have to remember that we are all doing this for the people of Ontario.

Finally, in conclusion, I would like to say, Madam Speaker, thank you again to all my friends, my family, my colleagues, my staff, and all of you for your support. I want to thank specifically the Premier for entrusting me in this role as President of the Treasury Board. I'm committed to working alongside my fellow cabinet ministers, my fellow MPP colleagues—the full caucus—to help Ontario to continue to grow and thrive. I will always remain optimistic that, together, we will achieve positive outcomes and build innovation and ideas through collaboration. That includes the members—all of us in this House.

A few weeks ago, when I was going to a Treasury Board meeting in the Frost building, just across the road from here—I guess it would be that way—I came across a plaque with a quote from the Honourable Leslie Miscampbell—that's his middle name—Frost. Frost served from 1937 to 1963. He was a Conservative Premier of Ontario from Ontario from 1949 to 1961. He was also the Treasurer of Ontario and Minister of Mines. His creed is particularly appropriate for the future of this province. His creed is from his first budget speech in 1944, where he said, "For the fine old province of Ontario, there will be a great future. We are building not only for these times, but we are also planning for a greater population; for industrial expansion; for prosperous farms; and for happy, healthy people." And this is my favourite part of the quote: "We are laying the sure foundations for a greater and stronger Ontario."

That was as true in 1944 and as it is today. We will continue to move forward, laying the sure foundations for a greater and stronger Ontario, and building upon the labours of those who came before us.

We will do this for everyone, for all of Ontario, so that this and future generations can enjoy the fruits of a province at its full potential. That's our promise. That's our creed.

1720

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate?

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Well, I've got some bad news for you. I'm not going to use all the time.

I want to say a couple of things, though, very quickly on this, the second time allocation motion on the same motion to change the standing orders of the Legislature—

and this will be probably a record. This will be the fifth time that I speak on this issue in the House. I don't think I've ever been quite in that situation, where on a bill or a piece of legislation that you got to speak to it so many times. But because there was the motion, the amendment, the amendment to the amendment, the time allocation motion, and yet another time allocation motion, this will be the fifth time. Whatever I've had to say—if you haven't heard it by now, I'm not going to repeat it a fifth time. So I'll keep my comments very brief.

I wanted to respond to a couple of quick things my friend across the way had to say in his maiden speech—not maiden speech. What do they call them again?

Interjection.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: Inaugural speech.

I appreciate your comments about your parents. Some of us aren't as lucky; our parents are not around. It is quite something to have our parents around us. I hope your dad does well. I hope that whatever is going on in his health is resolved and he can be back with you and enjoy the company that our parents bring. I just wanted to pass that on.

Certainly, your family is proud of your being elected and being here and doing the work that you're doing.

I wanted to close on a little story, because you talked about 9/11. All of us, through our lives, remember certain moments in life: Where were you when John Kennedy died? Where were you when Apollo 1 burned on the pad? Where were you when they landed on the moon? We all remember what we were doing at particular times, and 9/11 is an interesting one for moi. I'm a pilot and I fly my own airplane. I was flying to Moosonee, Ontario, from Timmins, and as I was up in the air, halfway between Moosonee and Timmins, at 3,500 or 5,500 feet—whatever I was flying that day—the radio came on 126.7, which is the en route frequency used by pilots internationally around the world. All of a sudden, they came on and said, "According to national directive such and such, you're to land at the nearest airport immediately. Stay off the airways." I remember thinking as I'm in the plane—I'm all alone and I'm flying up to Moosonee, and I'm closer to Moosonee than I am to Timmins. I have to admit, I broke the rule. I went back to Timmins. I didn't go to Moosonee.

But I remember being in the plane and thinking to myself, what could have happened that they're grounding every airplane in North America? Never in a million years would I have thought that the terrorist attack that happened in Pennsylvania and happened in New York and happened in Washington is what was unfolding. I was fearful it was something worse, and I won't even explain what that is. I think everybody can sort of get the conclusions. You don't land airplanes for nothing.

I think it comes back to what you said. You took the time from that experience to recognize, "Wake up and smell the coffee. You better appreciate everything you're doing now because you don't know what tomorrow will bring." I think that is a really good lesson to learn from your experience of 9/11. I'm sure that you probably had friends or family on your wife's side who were affected, either directly, unfortunately, by way of tragedy, or by

friendship with people who were affected. Those types of things are experiences that nobody should ever have to go through.

We hope that in a world that is getting smaller and smaller—this planet is so little. The thing that amazes me is, and this is—I hope people don't misconstrue what I'm going to say, but if you look at the Greek empire or the Roman Empire or the American empire of today, we're all afraid of our neighbours. It's anybody who's different—it's like "Oh, my God. You can't let those people in." You said it in your speech, and I think it has to be repeated: People move. Why? They move for economic reasons, they move for opportunity reasons, they move for reasons of family, whatever it might be. But the planet is so small that we have to find a way to live together. I think your story that you gave exemplifies the good that comes from people who decide to come to this country.

What's different with us—we're all immigrants. Except for our good friend Sol Mamakwa and other people from the First Nations, we all came here by way of immigration. We are a country of immigrants, and we generally, I think, embrace that, all of us. I think there's a small part of the population in Ontario and in Canada who have a very dim view of immigration and a non-progressive view of it. But I think most of us recognize that we're a country of only 30-some-odd million people in the second-largest country in the world—there's room; there's an ability—and we're not having babies at the rates we used to have before, and that immigration, in the end, is a good thing.

I just wanted to end by saying that I appreciated your comment, and it makes me think of one more thing. I know I'm now in the stretch beyond where I was going to go.

I was listening to a fascinating BBC program the other day, driving in from Timmins, on Sirius radio. They had a debate in the Vienna opera hall where they had members from the current government who just got elected in Austria, which is a right-wing and a far-right-wing party, the Social Democrats and the Liberal Democrats, and somebody from some banking institution, and they were talking about immigration.

Europe is having a very different experience. It's a different situation in Europe than it is in Canada, obviously. We're a country of immigrants, as we just said.

But they were going on and on about how they had to restrict immigration. The one that almost made me fall off my seat and laugh—because I see what happens on Facebook when people go, "Oh, Canada, we're so terrible; we let them all in." They held up Canada as the beacon of the most restrictive immigration system in the world.

Interjection: It's true. It's the most exclusionary.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: And it's true. It's very tough to get into this country. You have to have a reason to get in here. A lot of you have told your stories in your inaugural speeches. You didn't just all of a sudden knock at the door and show up in the country. People got here and you had to offer something to our nation. You had to have money and education. You had to have—

Interjection: The points system.

Mr. Gilles Bisson: There were points systems that had to be met. Even those who come here by way of refugee status, once they're here, we check them out. We don't just say, "Oh, welcome. Stay." We check them out, and if they're not refugees, they go back.

It was really interesting to listen. This particular party they were talking about are actually so far right-wing that they were accusing them of being former Nazis. I don't know if that's true or not. But the point was, they were talking about how Canada has got it right.

What you said in your speech is—and I heard it from different members of this assembly, on your side and mine, as they gave inaugural speeches. People have come from Iran, they've come from Russia, they've come from Tibet, they've come from India or they've come from all over the world. A whole bunch of people in this assembly are members who came in as refugees and made a life here—and look at the contribution that you're giving today. You are now in a very important position in this Legislature as a newcomer to this country, and we welcome you. You add something to the total goodness of this country.

I think we should always reflect about that, and we should try to resist those who try to say that immigration is a bad thing.

Should we have immigration policies that make sense? Absolutely. But let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater.

With that, Madam Speaker, j'ai fini. Merci.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Further debate? Further debate? Further debate?

Mr. Bethlenfalvy has moved government notice of motion number 12 relating to allocation of time on government order 4. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I heard a no.

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed to the motion will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. This will be a 10-minute bell.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Pursuant to standing order 28(h), the chief government whip requests that the vote on government notice of motion 12 be deferred until deferred votes on Monday, October 22, 2018.

Vote deferred.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Orders of the day? I recognize the deputy House leader.

Mr. Stephen Lecce: I move adjournment of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Ms. Jennifer K. French): Mr. Lecce has moved adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? I declare the motion carried.

This House stands adjourned until Monday, October 22, at 10:30.

The House adjourned at 1730.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
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Clerk / Greffier: Todd Decker
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Bailey, Robert (PC)	Sarnia—Lambton	
Barrett, Toby (PC)	Haldimand—Norfolk	
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Bell, Jessica (NDP)	University—Rosedale	
Berns-McGown, Rima (NDP)	Beaches—East York / Beaches—East York	
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Bisson, Gilles (NDP)	Timmins	Opposition House Leader / Leader parlementaire de l'opposition officielle
Bouma, Will (PC)	Brantford—Brant	
Bourgouin, Guy (NDP)	Mushkegowuk—James Bay / Mushkegowuk—Baie James	
Burch, Jeff (NDP)	Niagara Centre / Niagara-Centre	
Calandra, Paul (PC)	Markham—Stouffville	
Cho, Hon. / L'hon. Raymond Sung Joon (PC)	Scarborough North / Scarborough-Nord	Minister for Seniors and Accessibility / Ministre des Services aux aînés et de l'Accessibilité
Cho, Stan (PC)	Willowdale	
Clark, Hon. / L'hon. Steve (PC)	Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes / Leeds—Grenville—Thousand Islands et Rideau Lakes	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / Ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Coe, Lorne (PC)	Whitby	
Coteau, Michael (LIB)	Don Valley East / Don Valley-Est	
Crawford, Stephen (PC)	Oakville	
Cuzzetto, Rudy (PC)	Mississauga—Lakeshore	
Des Rosiers, Nathalie (LIB)	Ottawa—Vanier	
Downey, Doug (PC)	Barrie—Springwater—Oro-Medonte	
Dunlop, Jill (PC)	Simcoe North / Simcoe-Nord	
Elliott, Hon. / L'hon. Christine (PC)	Newmarket—Aurora	Deputy Premier / Vice-première ministre Minister of Health and Long-Term Care / Ministre de la Santé et des Soins de longue durée
Fedeli, Hon. / L'hon. Victor (PC)	Nipissing	Chair of Cabinet / Président du Conseil des ministres Minister of Finance / Ministre des Finances
Fee, Amy (PC)	Kitchener South—Hespeler / Kitchener-Sud—Hespeler	
Fife, Catherine (NDP)	Waterloo	
Ford, Hon. / L'hon. Doug (PC)	Etobicoke North / Etobicoke-Nord	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs / Ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales Premier / Premier ministre
Fraser, John (LIB)	Ottawa South / Ottawa-Sud	
French, Jennifer K. (NDP)	Oshawa	Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Troisième vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative

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Gélinas, France (NDP)	Nickel Belt	
Ghamari, Goldie (PC)	Carleton	
Gill, Parm (PC)	Milton	
Glover, Chris (NDP)	Spadina—Fort York	
Gravelle, Michael (LIB)	Thunder Bay—Superior North / Thunder Bay—Supérieur-Nord	
Gretzky, Lisa (NDP)	Windsor West / Windsor-Ouest	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Première vice-présidente du comité plénier de l'Assemblée
Hardeman, Hon. / L'hon. Ernie (PC)	Oxford	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / Ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Harden, Joel (NDP)	Ottawa Centre / Ottawa-Centre	
Harris, Mike (PC)	Kitchener—Conestoga	
Hassan, Faisal (NDP)	York South—Weston / York-Sud— Weston	
Hatfield, Percy (NDP)	Windsor—Tecumseh	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième vice-président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Hillier, Randy (PC)	Lanark—Frontenac—Kingston	
Hogarth, Christine (PC)	Etobicoke—Lakeshore	
Horwath, Andrea (NDP)	Hamilton Centre / Hamilton-Centre	Leader, Official Opposition / Chef de l'opposition officielle
Hunter, Mitzie (LIB)	Scarborough—Guildwood	
Jones, Hon. / L'hon. Sylvia (PC)	Dufferin—Caledon	Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport / Ministre du Tourisme, de la Culture et du Sport
Kanapathi, Logan (PC)	Markham—Thornhill	
Karahalios, Belinda (PC)	Cambridge	
Karpoche, Bhutla (NDP)	Parkdale—High Park	
Ke, Vincent (PC)	Don Valley North / Don Valley-Nord	
Kernaghan, Terence (NDP)	London North Centre / London- Centre-Nord	
Khanjin, Andrea (PC)	Barrie—Innisfil	
Kramp, Daryl (PC)	Hastings—Lennox and Addington	
Kusendova, Natalia (PC)	Mississauga Centre / Mississauga- Centre	
Lalonde, Marie-France (LIB)	Orléans	
Lecce, Stephen (PC)	King—Vaughan	Deputy Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire adjoint du gouvernement
Lindo, Laura Mae (NDP)	Kitchener Centre / Kitchener-Centre	
MacLeod, Hon. / L'hon. Lisa (PC)	Nepean	Minister of Children, Community and Social Services / Ministre des Services à l'enfance et des Services sociaux et communautaires Minister Responsible for Women's Issues / Ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Mamakwa, Sol (NDP)	Kiiwetinoong	
Mantha, Michael (NDP)	Algoma—Manitoulin	
Martin, Robin (PC)	Eglinton—Lawrence	
Martow, Gila (PC)	Thornhill	
McDonell, Jim (PC)	Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry	
McKenna, Jane (PC)	Burlington	
McNaughton, Hon. / L'hon. Monte (PC)	Lambton—Kent—Middlesex	Minister of Infrastructure / Ministre de l'Infrastructure
Miller, Norman (PC)	Parry Sound—Muskoka	
Miller, Paul (NDP)	Hamilton East—Stoney Creek / Hamilton-Est—Stoney Creek	
Mitas, Christina Maria (PC)	Scarborough Centre / Scarborough- Centre	
Monteith-Farrell, Judith (NDP)	Thunder Bay—Atikokan	
Morrison, Suze (NDP)	Toronto Centre / Toronto-Centre	
Mulroney, Hon. / L'hon. Caroline (PC)	York—Simcoe	Attorney General / Procureure générale Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs / Ministre déléguée aux Affaires francophones
Natyshak, Taras (NDP)	Essex	

Member and Party / Député(e) et parti	Constituency / Circonscription	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Nicholls, Rick (PC)	Chatham-Kent—Leamington	Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Président du comité plénier de l'Assemblée Deputy Speaker / Vice-président
Oosterhoff, Sam (PC)	Niagara West / Niagara-Ouest	
Pang, Billy (PC)	Markham—Unionville	
Park, Lindsey (PC)	Durham	
Parsa, Michael (PC)	Aurora—Oak Ridges—Richmond Hill	
Pettapiece, Randy (PC)	Perth—Wellington	
Phillips, Hon. / L'hon. Rod (PC)	Ajax	Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks / Ministre de l'Environnement, de la Protection de la nature et des Parcs
Piccini, David (PC)	Northumberland—Peterborough South / Northumberland—Peterborough-Sud	
Rakocevic, Tom (NDP)	Humber River—Black Creek	
Rasheed, Kaleed (PC)	Mississauga East—Cooksville / Mississauga-Est—Cooksville	
Rickford, Hon. / L'hon. Greg (PC)	Kenora—Rainy River	Minister of Energy, Northern Development and Mines / Ministre de l'Énergie, du Développement du Nord et des Mines Minister of Indigenous Affairs / Ministre des Affaires autochtones
Roberts, Jeremy (PC)	Ottawa West—Nepean / Ottawa-Ouest—Nepean	
Romano, Ross (PC)	Sault Ste. Marie	
Sabawy, Sheref (PC)	Mississauga—Erin Mills	
Sandhu, Amarjot (PC)	Brampton West / Brampton-Ouest	
Sarkaria, Prabmeet Singh (PC)	Brampton South / Brampton-Sud	
Sattler, Peggy (NDP)	London West / London-Ouest	
Schreiner, Mike (GRN)	Guelph	
Scott, Hon. / L'hon. Laurie (PC)	Haliburton—Kawartha Lakes—Brock	Minister of Labour / Ministre du Travail
Shaw, Sandy (NDP)	Hamilton West—Ancaster—Dundas / Hamilton-Ouest—Ancaster—Dundas	
Simard, Amanda (PC)	Glengarry—Prescott—Russell	
Singh, Gurratan (NDP)	Brampton East / Brampton-Est	
Singh, Sara (NDP)	Brampton Centre / Brampton-Centre	Deputy Leader, Official Opposition / Chef adjointe de l'opposition officielle
Skelly, Donna (PC)	Flamborough—Glanbrook	
Smith, Dave (PC)	Peterborough—Kawartha	
Smith, Hon. / L'hon. Todd (PC)	Bay of Quinte / Baie de Quinte	Minister of Government and Consumer Services / Ministre des Services gouvernementaux et des Services aux consommateurs Government House Leader / Leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stevens, Jennifer (Jennie) (NDP)	St. Catharines	
Stiles, Marit (NDP)	Davenport	
Surma, Kinga (PC)	Etobicoke Centre / Etobicoke-Centre	
Tabuns, Peter (NDP)	Toronto—Danforth	
Tangri, Nina (PC)	Mississauga—Streetsville	
Taylor, Monique (NDP)	Hamilton Mountain	
Thanigasalam, Vijay (PC)	Scarborough—Rouge Park	
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Tibollo, Hon. / L'hon. Michael A. (PC)	Vaughan—Woodbridge	Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services / Ministre de la Sécurité communautaire et des Services correctionnels
Triantafilopoulos, Effie J. (PC)	Oakville North—Burlington / Oakville-Nord—Burlington	
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Walker, Bill (PC)	Bruce—Grey—Owen Sound	
West, Jamie (NDP)	Sudbury	
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Yarde, Kevin (NDP)	Brampton North / Brampton-Nord	
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